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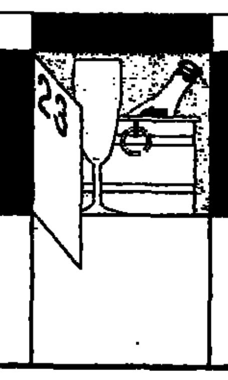
THE TIMES 40P

No. 65,458

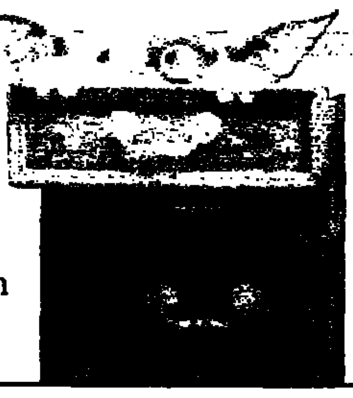
SATURDAY DECEMBER 23 1995

Christmas quiz

Wit and wisdom
The Quiz of the Year PLUS best buys in festive wine
MAGAZINE



Champagne jumbo crossword
Win a Methusela of Moët & Chandon
WEEKEND, P20



They're back ...
Gremlins and other Christmas television stars, in
VISION

BOXING DAY BONUS
The Times will be back on Tuesday. Details, PAGE 2

A farewell to farms
Paul Heiney writes his final Farmer's Diary
WEEKEND

Storm over refusal of lottery grant

Controversial £90 million opera house plan is branded too risky

By Alexandra Frean
Media Correspondent

A NEW row over the way lottery grants are distributed erupted yesterday after Virginia Bottomley, Heritage Secretary, refused to give £50 million of lottery cash to the developers of a new opera house in Cardiff.

Instead, the Millennium Commission, one of the five bodies charged with distributing lottery cash to "good causes", awarded £46 million to five environmental projects and five local community schemes. The centrepiece of yesterday's awards was a £21.5 million grant to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, Surrey, for a "seed bank" aimed at saving 25,000 plant species from extinction.

Lord Crickhowell, chairman of the Cardiff Bay Opera House scheme and a former Conservative Welsh Secretary, confronted Mrs Bottomley at a press conference in London, telling her that her rejection of the scheme was "shocking and incomprehensible". He vowed to fight the "wholly arbitrary and ill informed" decision and has already arranged a meeting with the Commission's chief executive, Jennifer Page, next Thursday to demand an explanation. Lord Crickhowell said: "I have very little doubt that if this had been a project funded by the Arts Council of England, they would have taken the risk. I have very little doubt that if this had been a project in London, that it would be getting backing. You can understand the annoyance of people in Wales that we can't get the kind of vitally important projects that London seems to be allowed."

Alun Michael, deputy chairman of the Opera House Trust whose Cardiff South and Penarth constituency includes Cardiff Bay, said that the Commission's response seemed to have come straight out of the television situation comedy *Yes, Minister*. "The dead hand of bureauracy is at work here," he said.

Lord Davies, chairman of the Welsh National Opera company, which was to have been housed in the new centre, described the decision as "a lost opportunity, not only for Welsh National Opera, but for the people of Cardiff and Wales." The Welsh opera stars Dennis O'Neill and Dame Gwyneth Jones said the decision represented a "slap in the face for Wales and Welsh culture".

Ann Clwyd, Shadow Heritage Secretary, accused the Government of being biased towards London and the Home Counties. Alex Carlile, leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats, said: "Wales has been snubbed."

But Mrs Bottomley, who also chairs the Commission, said that uncertainties about the finance, construction and design of the Cardiff Bay Opera House made the project too risky for lottery money. "We have to make decisions with our heads as well as out hearts. It would have given us great pleasure to say: 'Yes, this exciting project can go ahead', but there are just too many concerns about its long-term viability," she told Radio 4's *The World at One*.

The £90 million, 1,800-seat opera house was to be the "jewel in the crown" of Cardiff Bay's £3 billion programme to regenerate the economy of South Wales. However, the project did not appear to enjoy the wholehearted backing of Cardiff's population. Opinion polls conducted by local newspapers and the South Glamorgan County Council showed that overwhelmingly, by three to one, people favoured a rival £55 million lottery bid from Cardif Arms Park, the home of Welsh Rugby, to the opera house.

Another poll, organised by the BBC, revealed that 88 per cent of those asked disliked the winning design by London-based architect Zaha Hadid.

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Millennium awards, page 4

Travellers face bleak midwinter traffic crawl

By Joanna Bale

THE joys of Christmas were muted for millions of travellers forced to contend with traffic jams, rain, snow, slush and floods yesterday.

But like King Wenceslas, undeterred by hostile weather conditions, an estimated 25 million took to the roads, rail and air as the Christmas exodus got under way.

For drivers things were anything but crisp and even. Mucky and tiresome was a more accurate description. Slush and floods made for difficult driving conditions and by the late afternoon huge traffic jams blocked many major routes across the country.

Devon, South Wales, Bristol, Somerset, Cambridge and Northamptonshire were among areas with flooding while in the North some motorists were forced to negotiate snowdrifts.

The big go-slow however was not as bad as last year because the new Sunday opening hours prevented a last-minute Christmas shopping rush, according to motoring organisations.

In the Peak District a father and his son died when their car crashed into two lorries at an accident blackspot. A second son, aged six, was last night seriously ill in hospital with head, chest and lung injuries. Three other people were slightly injured when two HGVs collided with two cars on the A515 at Parsley Hay, between Ashbourne and Buxton. Police closed the road for several hours, causing huge jams.

In Eltham in South London, an overturned lorry blocked the South Circular for several hours causing major delays which extended to the A2 towards Kent.

Forecasters said that conditions are expected to be poor over the weekend with ice and snow in many areas. The London Weather Centre said last night that today will be cloudy with rain at times. In the North, there will be sleet in hill regions before the weather turns generally drier and brighter, although colder.

Tomorrow there will be rain in central and southern parts, turning to sleet and snow before the brighter, colder weather moves down from the North. Those in the North East of Scotland are most likely to get a white Christmas. Meanwhile, rail travellers in the North West of England got off to a slow start when commuter services in Greater Manchester and Cheshire were disrupted by a 24-hour strike of conductors at Manchester's Piccadilly Station. At least six stations in the area were closed.

Thousands more people deserted Britain yesterday to spend Christmas in the sun or on the ski slopes in what many airports described as one of their most hectic days of the year.

Heathrow has already begun its busiest Christmas with 800,000 passengers expected to pass through the airport between December 21 and December 27, a 4 per cent increase on the same period last year. The busiest day is expected to be January 2 when the airport will handle about 160,000 passengers.

Gatwick airport handled about 65,000 passengers yesterday with 700,000 expected to use the airport between yesterday and January 2. The most popular destinations from the airport are Tenerife, the Spanish resorts, Florida and Australia.

Stansted airport in Essex is expecting to handle 100,000 passengers over the Christmas and new year period. Its most popular destinations are Ireland and Scotland. Irish airline Aer Lingus said it would carry 56,500 passengers to Ireland between December 17 and 24.

Travel agents Going Places predicted that more than 500,000 Britons would be heading abroad this Christmas.

British Airways is taking 250,000 people away over the festive period. Lured by the cricket Test series, many sunseekers are heading for South Africa. BA has no domestic flights on Christmas Day, but will operate 24 long-haul services from Heathrow as well as 11 short-haul flights. The airline will be serving up 1,300 turkeys, 1,000 kilograms of Brussels sprouts, 45,000 mince pies, 2,000 Christmas puddings, and 6,500 bottles of champagne. Passengers will even be able to see the Queen's Christmas message.

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MICHAEL POWELL

Singing in exultation: Salisbury Cathedral School choirgirls rehearsing for Christmas yesterday. From left, Jessica Wooley, Olivia Paterson and Hannah Waddington

Football team leads way with foreigners

By John Goodbody, Sports News Correspondent

THE FA Premier League was yesterday forced to change its rules over foreign players when Manchester City announced that it had picked four for their squad today.

After the European Court decision over the Jean-Marc Bosman case last week, City selected three players from European Union countries and one from Georgia for the Premiership match against Chelsea at Maine Road. Their move immediately forced the Premier League to change their regulations to allow clubs to field an unlimited number of EU citizens.

Football's ruling that clubs could field only three foreigners, plus two "assimilated players", was found by the court to be unlawful because there has to be a free-flow of workers across the Union.

Rick Parry, the chief executive of the FA Premier League, said: "The legal advice we have received makes clear that rules which attempt to limit the number of European Union nationals are unenforceable in the light of the Bosman judgment."

City celebrates, page 40

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Austria Sch 40; Belgium B Frs 80; Canada $3.25; Canaries Pes 325; Cyprus C£1.20; Denmark Dkr 18.00; Finland Fmk 17.00; France F 14.00; Germany DM 4.50; Gibraltar 90p; Greece Dr 450; Netherlands Fl 4.50; Irish Republic 50p; Italy L 4,500; Luxembourg Lf 60; Madeira Esc 350; Malta 45c; Morocco Dir 27.00; Norway Kr 20.00; Portugal con Esc 350; Spain Pts 325; Sweden Skr 18.00; Switzerland S Frs 4.00; Tunisia Din 2.200; USA $3.50.

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Richard Morrison on the great King Wenceslas mystery
Page 13

Holiday isle toasts a £185 million prize

From Edward Owen in Madrid

MAJORCA was filled with Christmas cheer yesterday when *El Gordo* (The Fat One), the Spanish national lottery, paid out its biggest ever first prize of £185 million to hundreds of customers of a lottery shop in a poor suburb of Palma, the island's capital.

"The last time we sold any winning ticket was ten years ago," said Antonio Duran, the ecstatic manager of the lottery outlet near the town's airport. "Now everyone knows someone in Palma who's won a slice of *El Gordo*."

Bottles of *cava*, Spanish sparkling wine, were popped open in the street as groups of men, mostly without jobs — Spain has 23 per cent unemployment — set up a spontaneous chant. Politely translated, it said something like: "Sod the dole, we've won the lottery."

Maria Tomas, 34, a cleaning lady with one son, had a double cause for celebration. Her mother sent her a ticket that won £10,000 and she won another £8,000 from her share of the first prize in Palma.

There are three main differences between *El Gordo* and the National Lottery in Britain. It is entirely run by the state, punters buy shares in specific numbers and there is no competition for handouts.

This year the Red Cross and cancer research benefited from special draws. Funds for cultural projects, like the rebuilding of an opera house in Barcelona, are raised from public funds, commercial sponsorship and private donations.

In Palma's lucky suburb, anyone hoping for a hangover cure will have to stagger into town. The local chemist disappeared after winning £500,000.

Norwegian skis solo to South Pole

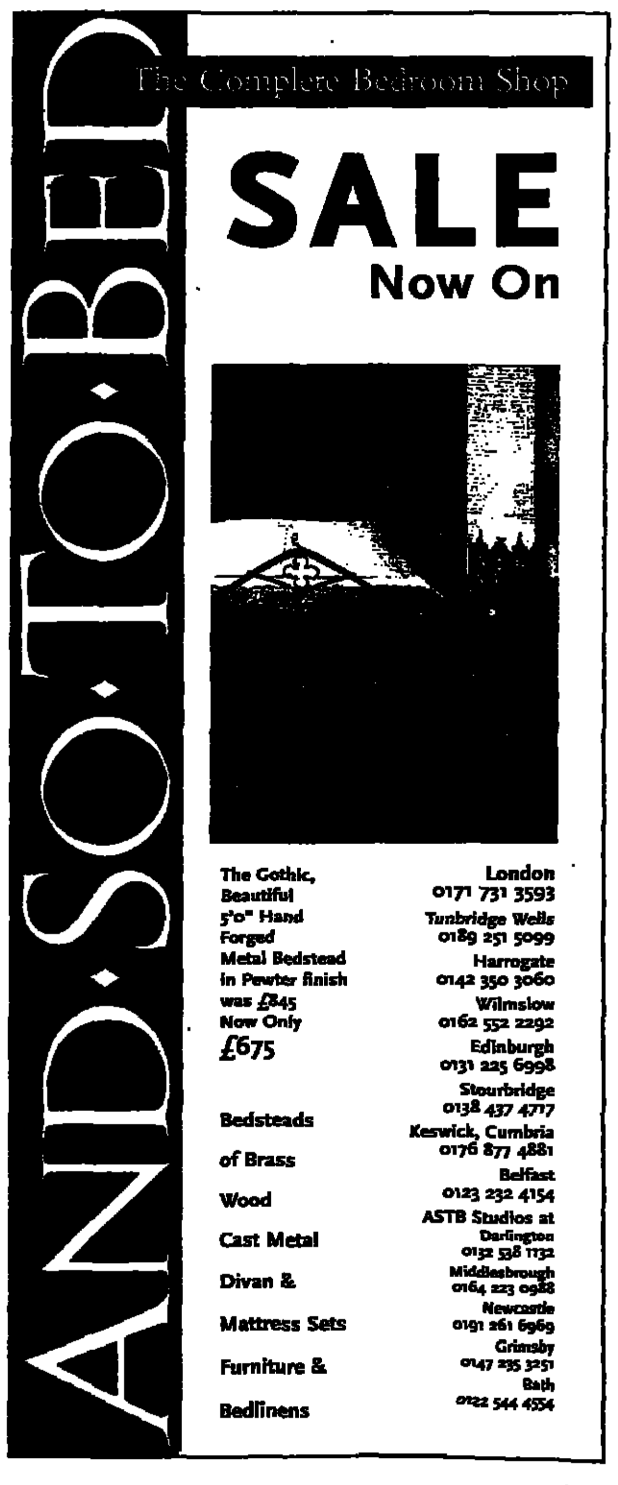
By Richard Duce

A NORWEGIAN adventurer succeeded yesterday — where Roger Mear, the British explorer, had failed — in reaching the South Pole in an unaided 45-day trek of 838 miles.

Fifty researchers formed a circle around the pole and cheered Borge Ousland as he dragged his sled the last few yards to set his third polar skiing record. Last year, he had set the solo record for the North Pole.

Ousland now plans to continue his journey and ski all the way across Antarctica to set yet another record.

Ousland, 33, and Mear, 45, had set off from Berkner Island in the Weddell Sea in November on separate efforts to become the first to make the solo crossing to the South Pole but the Briton was forced to give up on December 17.



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BOXING DAY IN
THE TIMES

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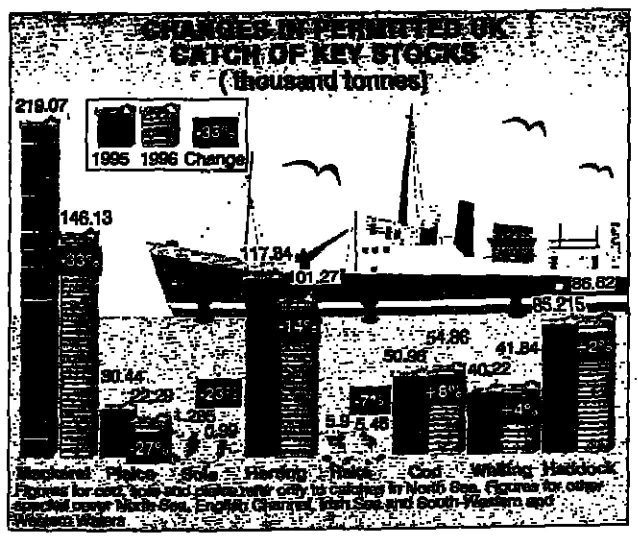
A year to remember: the best and worst of 1995

NOT ALL PAPERS WILL BE PUBLISHED ON BOXING DAY. PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR THE TIMES TODAY

Minister hails 'best possible' Brussels deal

Fishermen threaten to cheat on catch quotas

By Michael Hornsby
and Jill Sherman



FISHERMEN and Euro-sceptic MPs were unimpressed yesterday when the Fisheries Minister, Tony Baldry, returned home claiming to have won a famous victory for the British fishing industry in marathon talks in Brussels. They said they would be stepping up their campaign for Britain to pull out of the EU's common fisheries policy.

Barry Deas, chief executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, said the Brussels deal on catch limits for 1996 left fishermen with a stark choice. "Increasingly, the option for some of these trawlermen is going to be to go bankrupt or to start cheating on quotas."

Bleary-eyed and hoarse after 15 hours of non-stop negotiation through Thursday night, Mr Baldry said: "I achieved my objective of securing the best possible deal for British fishermen consistent with the science and the conservation of stocks."

Mr Baldry said he had clawed back 10 per cent of the cuts originally proposed by the European Commission in the amount of fish the British fleet will be allowed to catch next year under the EU's quota system. He estimated this would be worth £30 million to the industry.

"In the North Sea, the UK's quota for herring is 12,700 tonnes higher than was in prospect at the start of the negotiation a few weeks ago, that for whiting 4,700 tonnes higher, that for plaice 6,100 tonnes higher and that for sole 345 tonnes higher."

Athough the cuts agreed in Brussels are not as big as feared, permitted British catches of most species will be significantly lower next year, as they will be for most other member states. The main exceptions are catches of cod, whiting and haddock, which will be allowed to rise by 8 per cent, 4 per cent and 2 per cent respectively because cutbacks in previous years have enabled stocks to recover.

Mr Deas acknowledged that the minister had done his best, but was particularly worried about the impact on fishermen of reductions of 27 per cent and 23 per cent in the British quotas for plaice and sole in the North Sea.

"Plaice is a key catch for Grimsby and Lowestoft trawlers", he said. "The small inshore boats based along the coasts of Suffolk, Essex and Kent are even more reliant on sole. It is a small stock and up to 30 per cent is taken by Dutch flag-of-convenience vessels which register in Britain so they can catch our fish."

John Wilkinson, MP for Ruislip, Northwood and one of 13 Tories who rebelled in the fisheries vote earlier this week, said: "I shall continue to press for British sovereignty over what should be a British resource in British waters. We want a 200-mile limit and to withdraw from the common fisheries policy so that we can manage our own fishing resources."

David Porter, MP for Waveney and another fishing rebel, said the fleet would be reduced even further and the future of Lowestoft fish market, which is in his constituency, was now in jeopardy. "This is a less bad deal than we had feared, but it's still a bad deal because it will cut fishermen's livelihoods."

David Harris, Tory MP for St Ives, another fishing constituency, conceded that Mr Baldry had reduced the impact the cuts would have had. "But the fishermen will not be happy because they didn't want any cuts at all and there had to be some on scientific grounds."

Thousands join airport getaway

By Jonathan Prynn
and Harvey Elliott

RAILWAY services are expected to start winding down about 9pm tomorrow in preparation for Christmas. Few local services will operate during the late evening although some InterCity services will run until midnight. On Christmas Day there will be no trains except for Le Shuttle, which will operate an hourly Channel Tunnel service. Stena Sealink will be operating cross-Channel ferries on Christmas Day for the first time. Choirs entertained passengers at Gatwick airport, which expects a total of 700,000 by January 2. Heathrow airport will handle 800,000 passengers, while Stansted will play host to 100,000 and Luton to 50,000 — a 40 per cent rise on last year.

Tinsel-clad passengers heading home to Norway from Heathrow yesterday

Bottomley: her decision a "snub for Wales"

Lottery

Continued from page 1

Heather Wilkinson, the Commission's deputy chief executive, said that the opera house trust had been forecasting revenue losses of "several hundreds of thousands of pounds" a year. "We are not in the business of funding white elephants," she said.

The row about the opera house adds a new twist to the on-going controversy over lottery grants. The Arts Council faced a storm of criticism in July for awarding £55 million to the Royal Opera House in London because it was seen as using public money to subsidise an "elitist" form of entertainment.

Despite yesterday's claims of an anti-Wales bias in lottery grants, Mrs Bottomley said that Wales had won ten per cent of the Commission's 306 awards, worth £338 million, even though its population represented just five per cent of the British total.

☐ **Marcus Binney writes:** The choice of Zaha Hadid's design for the Cardiff opera house was welcomed in establishment architectural circles, but provoked intense dismay in Cardiff where public feeling ran strongly in favour of an alternative scheme by the Italian Manfredi Nicoletti.

In response to public outcry, four of the finalists were invited to rework and resubmit their schemes but to widespread surprise, Lord Crickhowell came down in favour of the Hadid scheme.

Miss Hadid's design came under strong attack initially because it looked more like an office block or car park, without the distinctive silhouette many expected of an opera house. While some see Miss Hadid's designs as daring, others consider them pretentious. One of her few completed buildings, a fire station near Basle, was converted to a museum little more than a year after it opened.

Millennium awards, page 4

Blair says no to new top rate of taxation

Tony Blair pledged that there would be "no revolution" under a Labour government as he stepped up his efforts to court the middle classes.

In an interview for Radio 4's *Today* Mr Blair insisted any change would be gradual. He also played down the idea that Labour would impose a new top rate of tax and denied that he was planning to introduce a middle rate of about 30p.

Key finding

Researchers have discovered a new way of protecting sensitive computer systems from hackers and snoopers. They have found that computer operators can be identified from the way they strike the keys. On average, a typing "signature" emerges after 51 key strokes, according to the *International Journal of Human Computer Studies*.

Forgeries rise

The number of foreigners attempting to enter Britain using forged travel documents rose by 30 per cent last year, according to government figures. The most common forged papers were from European Union and European Economic Area states. A total of 183 people were caught on the Channel Tunnel train.

Man decapitated

Detectives are hunting a killer who chopped off his victim's head and left it with the body near a moorland beauty spot. The dead man was found by a motorist alongside the A57 in the Derbyshire Peak District on Thursday. Thirty officers are involved in the murder inquiry and are trying to identify the middle-aged victim.

Drunks in charge

Two men in Strathclyde have been charged with drink-driving offences despite being passengers. The men were both supervising learner drivers when stopped. Jim Neill, head of Strathclyde Police traffic specialist services, said: "Motorists contemplating trying to dodge the drink-drive laws in this way are warned not to do so."

Flu deaths rise

Deaths from flu have increased by more than 400 per cent this month, according to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. Fifty-two people died of flu-related illnesses in the three weeks to December 15 compared to just 12 people in the three weeks prior to that. Twenty people died of flu-related illnesses last week.

CORRECTION

An article on page six yesterday incorrectly said the speed limit on dual carriageways was 60 mph. It is 70mph.

IRA plot led Dublin to drop jail releases

By Nicholas Watt
Ireland Correspondent

AN IRA plot to carry out a series of armed robberies in the Irish Republic, and five murders in Belfast by suspected IRA gunmen, led Dublin to drop plans for the early release of republican inmates this Christmas.

As Sinn Fein condemned Ireland's decision, it emerged in Dublin last night that the Government had acted after Irish police uncovered plans by the IRA to raid cash shipments in the Republic. The plot was uncovered during a month-long investigation throughout the Republic. Police foiled several plans.

They seized four unoccupied vehicles at Charleville, Co Cork, on Thursday. It is thought that the IRA was planning a hold-up. The discovery of the vehicles came after three officers prevented an armed robbery on a cash shipment outside Monasterevin, Co Kildare, last week. As they inspected a van, two men jumped out brandishing submachineguns.

The disclosure about the armed robberies came as a senior Irish source made clear that the Government dropped the prison releases to send an "unmistakable signal" to the IRA of its anger over the murders in Belfast. Two alleged drugs dealers were killed in Belfast this week, bringing to five the number of men believed to have been shot dead by the IRA since April.

The Irish Cabinet's sub-committee on Northern Ireland recommended on Monday that the Government shelve plans to release ten republican prisoners permanently before the end of their sentences. The inmates, who are believed to include Tommy McMahon, who was convicted of the murder of Earl Mountbatten, will be free on parole for the Christmas period.

The senior Irish source said, of Dublin's move: "This is a rebuff to republicans and Sinn Fein knows what it means. Punishment beatings and shootings are unjustified and are not in keeping with the spirit of the peace."

Sinn Fein's vice president, Pat Doherty, said: "John Bruton's attempt to use republican prisoners as bargaining tools is disgraceful and will do nothing to consolidate this [peace] process or build trust."

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NATIONAL SAVINGS

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Burglars walk out with furniture

Duchess robbed as she watches herself on TV with Queen

BY A STAFF REPORTER

BURGLARS stole antique furniture worth £41,000 from the home of the Duke and Duchess of Grafton as the couple watched a television programme showing the duchess with the Queen on the Royal Yacht *Britannia*.

Other period pieces had been gathered together in the drawing room of Euston Hall in Suffolk. The duke, 76, said yesterday that he believed the raiders had been disturbed before starting on his collection of pictures.

He and the duchess, 75, were watching the programme in the television room. "It was obviously of particular interest to us because my wife featured in the film," the duke said. "She was on board *Britannia* with the Queen during the visit to South Africa in March. I can't think they would have known that, but you just never know and it must be a possibility."

The duke: called for police protection

The burglars broke into the hall, near Thetford, Norfolk, on Wednesday night by removing tiles from the roof of the billiard room, an area not covered by floodlights. They moved through the cellars and into the main hall.

The house is open to the public one day a week in the summer and the 11th duke is certain that the burglars knew the internal layout. He said: "I am afraid they knew exactly what they were looking for." He felt it was time that the hall, with its valuable furniture collection and an art collection "of national importance and priceless" should have special police protection.

The duke said: "When the programme had finished I came out to find the front door open and my wife went into the drawing room and discovered the furniture was missing.

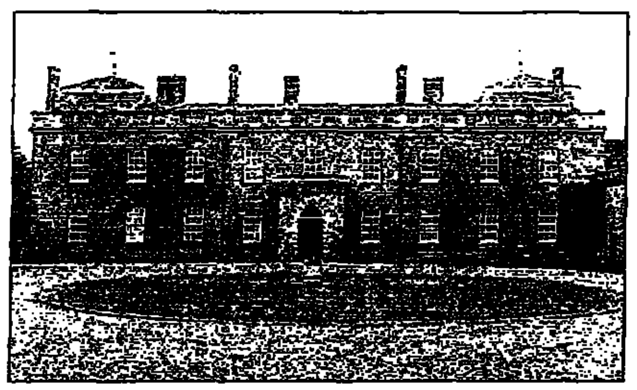
"We must have interrupted them as they were taking it out. We were extremely lucky not to have confronted them, as I feel we would have been attacked. I dialed 999 and it seemed to take a long time for the police to arrive. I am afraid that is the way of the world nowadays, but I feel it it is time we had special protection.

"They knew what they were after and must have known we were next door and there were staff on the premises. They simply walked out of the front door with a pair of very beautiful Chippendale card tables, a wine cooler and another table from the drawing room. The best pieces from the room were in the middle of the room waiting to be taken on return journeys. They were taking a tremendous risk."

Detectives hunting the gang said that a £4,000 reward was being offered for information leading to the burglars being caught. George III mahogany card tables were worth £35,000, a mahogany wine cooler £3,000 and a mid-Victorian walnut and marquetry centre table £3,000. There was £1,000 damage to the property.

Detective Inspector Stewart Gull of Suffolk police said: "The duke and duchess were badly shaken but not injured. We would like to hear from anyone who may have any information to come forward, although we have no description of the offenders. It is believed a vehicle was used and may have been parked on the road leading to the church on the estate."

Detectives believe the stolen antiques may be smuggled out of the country for sale to foreign collectors. Mr Gull said: "All the pieces are very distinctive and as His Grace has said are of almost unique national importance. They will be very hard to sell on the open market here."


Euston Hall: the burglars are believed to have noted its layout during public opening hours

JEFF GILBERT

Sophie Rhys-Jones yesterday, leaving her marketing job for the last time

Royals gather for festivities at Sandringham

BY EMMA WILKINS

THE Royal Family, with the exception of the Princess of Wales, is gathering at Sandringham today in preparation for the traditional exchange of presents on Christmas Eve.

It will be the first time since the Waleses' separation three years ago that the Princess has not made even a token display of family togetherness at Sandringham. Last year she joined the royal party's walk to church on Christmas morning but left before lunch.

Some reports suggest the Princess may be planning to visit homeless people or hospital patients before flying off for a skiing holiday in Colorado. Other sources say she will remain at Kensington Palace.

The Princess, who had originally planned to attend church with the family on Christmas Day, made the decision to stay away after her *Panorama* interview last month but before she and her husband were urged by the Queen to consider a divorce.

The Prince of Wales is due to arrive tomorrow with Prince William, 13, and Prince Harry, 11. They are expected to depart for their usual skiing holiday in Klosters on New Year's Day.

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother will take her place at the family's Christmas Eve dinner and is expected to join the procession to St Mary Magdalene Church the following day. If she manages the quarter of a mile walk, it will be the first time that her hip replacement has been fully tested in public.

Prince Edward is expected at Sandringham but it is thought unlikely that he will be joined by his girlfriend, Sophie Rhys-Jones, until after Christmas. Speculation continues to mount that the couple will announce their engagement early in the new year. She left her job at a media marketing company yesterday and plans to start her own consultancy.

The Duchess of York arrived yesterday at the nine-bedroom Wood Farm on the Sandringham estate in Norfolk, where she will be staying with her daughters Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie. The Duke of York will stay at Sandringham House.

Princess Margaret will attend the family celebrations with her daughter Lady Sarah Chatto and son-in-law Daniel.

Viscount Linley and his wife Serena will also be there. The Princess Royal will be accompanied by her husband Captain Timothy Laurence and her children Peter and Zara Phillips.

Slimming aid maker guilty of fresh hoax

BY RICHARD DUCE

A FORMER boyfriend of the model and singer Samantha Fox was found guilty yesterday of another plot to dupe slimmers into buying his products.

Peter Foster was convicted at Liverpool Crown Court of conspiring with Michelle Deakin, a former Young Slimmer of the Year, to supply "slimming granules" in breach of trading standard regulations. After the verdict the court was told that Australian-born Foster, 33, was fined for a similar offence last year at Warwick Crown Court by claiming that Bai Lin tea was a slimming aid.

Neil Flewitt, for the prosecution, said Foster, of Barnet, north London, was on bail in 1988 for the Bai Lin offence when he approached Deakin. He persuaded her to endorse his slimming product — made from guar gum which induced a "full-up" feeling — although she had never used it.

Foster was remanded in custody for pre-sentence reports. He is on bail to St Albans Magistrates' Court on charges relating to a thigh-reducing cream.

Briton is found murdered in his Paris flat

BY ADAM SAGE IN PARIS AND STEWART TENDLER

A BRITISH property executive has been found murdered in his Paris flat. He had been expected by his family to be home for Christmas, but travel arrangement concerning a new job in New York had delayed him, his father said last night.

Ian Wootton, 31, a manager with the Hammerson property company, was to have spent the holiday with his parents in Brentwood, Essex.

Yesterday French police said they believed that burglars had been responsible for the murder. The flat is in one of Paris's most expensive districts. His furniture and belongings were waiting to be shipped.

His father, Leonard, a retired bank official, said Essex police had visited the family yesterday after French police discovered the battered body of Mr Wootton in his bed about 9pm on Thursday night. His son had been held up in Paris because the American Embassy had been unable to grant him a visa. Embassy staff had been dealing only with emergencies as a result of work restrictions imposed by the Washington budget crisis. A flight had been booked for Boxing Day.

Detectives said Mr Wootton had been struck several times over the head and body, probably after he had disturbed thieves. A police source said: "It doesn't look as though the intruders arrived with the intention of killing him. But the investigation is still continuing and conclusions are far from definitive."

Hi-fi equipment was missing from the flat in rue Duret, less than half a mile from the Arc de Triomphe in the French capital's 16th district. According to French police, Mr Wootton, who was homosexual, lived alone.

Mr Wootton, Snr, said his son, the elder of two, had been educated at a local comprehensive school. He qualified as a chartered surveyor and took a degree at the South Bank University and then an MBA in Paris where he had worked for four years. He was described as a dedicated man who worked long hours and had few outside interests. His body was expected to be sent back to Britain for burial.

Evans laughs off £7,000 cost of missing breakfast

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE Radio 1 disc jockey Chris Evans was fined a day's pay yesterday for failing to turn up for his breakfast show on Thursday.

The £1 million-a-year presenter, whose company Ginger Productions makes the programme for the BBC, was believed to have been fined about £7,000 by Matthew Bannister, the Controller of Radio 1.

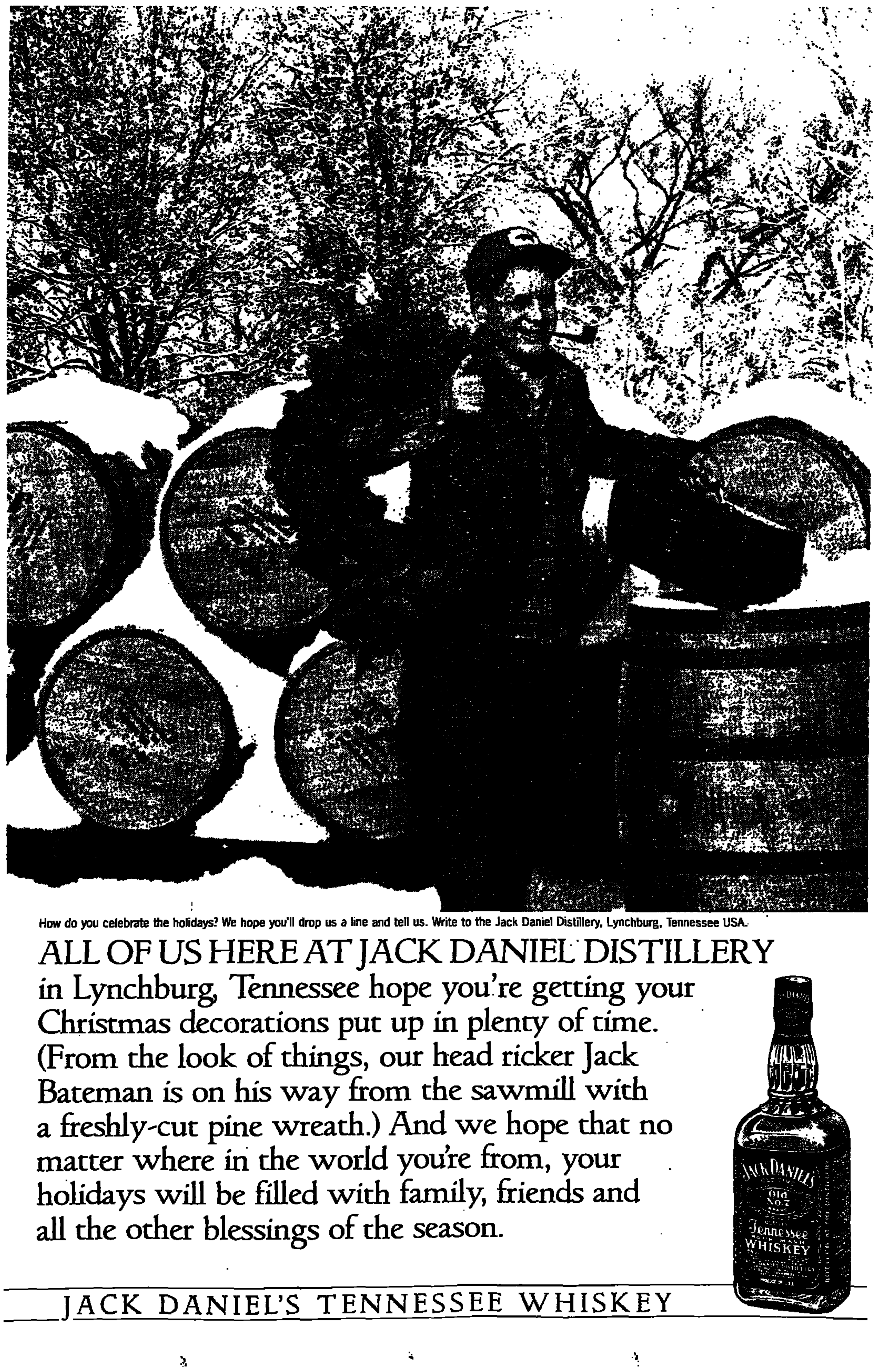
Evans, 29, spent almost 30 minutes in the controller's office, where he was given a warning about failing to fulfil his contract. A BBC spokeswoman said: "Chris has been severely told off and his wages docked, which for him is quite substantial."

Evans: lunch lasted into the early hours

Evans refused yesterday to speak about the incident, which began when he treated his production team to a Christmas lunch which lasted until the early hours of Thursday morning. When he failed to turn up for work at 4.30am, his slot was filled by other DJs. Yesterday Evans returned to the airwaves and joked about missing the programme. "It's so good to be back. I feel like I've had a holiday in Bermuda — although it was more expensive than a week in Bermuda," he told listeners.

Not only did Evans have to ring in sick on Thursday but his team of researchers also failed to turn up. "The BBC's official line on me was that I had a sore throat. So what about you lot, because you weren't in either?" he asked them on air yesterday.

Evans is next due to be working on Christmas Day when his special guest will be the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey. Since joining Radio 1, Evans has boosted audience figures by more than 600,000.


How do you celebrate the holidays? We hope you'll drop us a line and tell us. Write to the Jack Daniel Distillery, Lynchburg, Tennessee USA.

ALL OF US HERE AT JACK DANIEL DISTILLERY in Lynchburg, Tennessee hope you're getting your Christmas decorations put up in plenty of time. (From the look of things, our head ricker Jack Bateman is on his way from the sawmill with a freshly-cut pine wreath.) And we hope that no matter where in the world you're from, your holidays will be filled with family, friends and all the other blessings of the season.

JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Millennium awards: botanists and conservationists rejoice, but lovers of Welsh opera lose out

£21.5m grant for seed bank comes 'in nick of time'

By Bill Frost

KEW GARDENS

THE survival of native flowering plants and of thousands of species in the arid regions of the world is assured with the Millennium Commission's grant of £21.5 million of lottery money to Kew Gardens.

A new seed bank to be built on a six-acre site at Wakehurst Place, the West Sussex estate leased by the Royal Botanic Gardens from the National Trust, will also give scientists the opportunity to discover the medicinal properties of certain plants.

Researchers at Kew said yesterday that the grant had come "just in the nick of time". They are concerned that seed has not been collected from the vast majority of plant species at a time of increasing pressure on wildlife from rising human population and pollution.

Some estimates envisage 25 per cent of worldwide plant species becoming extinct in the next half-century unless urgent action is taken.

The seed bank will be a safe haven for at least 10 per cent of the world's flora by 2010. The main emphasis, however, will be on British species such as *Orobanche caryophyllacea* — clove-scented broomrape — restricted to a handful of sites in Kent.

Professor Sir Ghillean Prance, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, said yesterday: "The saving of rare seeds and potentially useful wild species of plants is one of the most important gifts our generation could give to the people of the third millennium.

"There is no doubt that species of plants will continue to become extinct in the wild. We must not lose their genetic potential and the seed bank will ensure their survival for use and reintroduction.

"The design of the new seed bank will ensure both the safety of the seeds as a world resource and will allow visitors to learn more about their importance and their conservation. The installation of this vast expansion to our seed bank is one of the greatest and most important challenges ever faced by the Royal Botanic Gardens. However, I know my staff will respond to it."

Queen Victoria: gave Kew to the nation

Once seeds gathered in Britain and abroad are delivered to Wakehurst Place, they are placed in an insulated drying room with a constant temperature of 15C and 15 per cent relative humidity, guaranteeing their continued viability for the next 1,000 years. Roger Smith, Kew's head of seed conservation, said he was "deliriously happy" with the commission's largesse. "You cannot underestimate the importance of this project. To say we are pleased is an understatement.

"However, this is one hell of a challenge too. They have primed the pump for us and now the project has to deliver."

Mr Smith said that British botanists, under expert supervision, would be asked to play a major role in seed collection. Their Third World counterparts, particularly in the arid and semi-arid regions of the world where the threat to wild species was greatest, would be asked to take part in the project. On request, seed samples will be sent, free of charge, to where they are most needed.

The seeds can be used for an extraordinary number of purposes. One collection from the existing bank at Wakehurst Place proved vital in fighting rare human blood disorders. *Vicia* seeds gathered from a Mediterranean species of vetch provided a vital clotting protein.

Kew's scientific and medical research was well established long before the 300-acre site in southwest London was donated to the nation in 1841 by Queen Victoria. Her ancestor, Princess Augusta, had established the gardens, now 72 per cent funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, early in the previous century.

Augusta's son, George III, was to employ advisers who travelled the world in search of new species which should be both aesthetically interesting and potentially valuable to science and medicine.

ANDREW HASSON

Roger Smith, head of seed conservation at Wakehurst Place, said he was "deliriously happy" with the Millennium Commission's grant

Black legacy of King Coal will be transformed into nature reserve

By Paul Wilkinson

DURHAM BEACHES

THE infamous "black beaches" of east Durham are to be cleaned up to create a nature reserve with the aid of £4.5 million from the Millennium Fund, it was announced yesterday.

The beaches have been stained by almost a century of spoil-tipping from the county's once extensive coal industry. Once transformed, they are expected to attract up to 300,000 visitors a year.

About £10.5 million is being raised by a consortium of organisations including the National Trust, local authorities and English Nature, the government's conservation body. Work should be completed by 2000. English Nature will seek a designation as a national nature reserve and the Countryside Commission expects the beaches and cliffs to qualify for Heritage Coast status.

The East Durham Task Force, which drew up the scheme, was disappointed that the commission would not grant £1.5 million to help reopen six railway stations which until the end of the 19th century brought holidaymakers in their thousands to the coast. However, Ken Buchanan, regional officer of the Countryside Commission said: "We re still looking forward to seeing work start on the project as a whole at the earliest opportunity".

Before the arrival of coal mining late in the last century, the 12-mile coast between Blackhall and Ryhope was known for its wooded valleys, known locally as denes, running down the beach. But the shore became a convenient place for the coastal pits to dump the waste from their shafts which ran several miles out under the sea bed.

Tipping ended two years ago with the closure of the county's last deep mine at Easington and although the action of the sea has begun to clean the sands, nature left to its own devices would take decades to return them to their original condition. At the centre of the scheme are plans to remove two spoil heaps whose residue could continue polluting the area for decades to come.

David Bellamy, the naturalist, who is a native of County Durham, is backing the scheme. He said: "I am a great fan of the coast and its fantastic denes. It is a special place for lovers of nature. It has always been a place of great beauty, even when covered with the black spoil from the collieries.

"It is great vision to create a clean coast, enhance its nature value and bring visitors to enjoy it. Local people have had to put up with tipping for the best part of a century. They deserve something better."

Kingsley Smith, the task force chairman said news of the grant was "a marvellous Christmas present."

As well as the Durham project, environmental schemes receiving grants include one to create a 12½ mile coastal park at Llanelli in Dyfed. The scheme, under which former industrial sites will be cleaned up, has won £14.5 million funding. The project will link Pembrey Country Park in the west and Pen-clawdd Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre in the east and includes plans for cycle routes and "green gateways" linking into urban areas.

The commision yesterday also awarded £1.6 million to the development of a National Wildflower Centre at Huyton, Merseyside. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, has won £2.8 million to create a wetlands conservation centre.

TED DITCHBURN

The black beach of Hordern, Co Durham, stained by decades of waste-dumping ...

'Music for toffs' loses battle for hearts in land of rugby and song

By Tim Jones

CARDIFF BAY OPERA

NOT everyone in Wales was mourning the Millennium Fund's decision to refuse a £50 million grant for the proposed Cardiff Bay opera house.

Opera lovers complained that once again London and southeast England was benefiting at the expense of the regions. But the rebuff renewed hopes that a project closer to most Welsh hearts can now proceed.

The opera house, designed as the centrepiece of a development plan for the Cardiff waterfront, divided supporters of the two great national passions, rugby and song.

With the Welsh Rugby Union seeking £55 million to rebuild the National Stadium at a cost of £110 million in time for the 1999 Rugby World Cup, there was never the remotest chance that both projects would be approved.

Although the commission has also rejected rugby application, the union is expected to reapply to the commission in February with a scaled down request.

The debate over which plan should benefit became so heated in Wales that Rhodri Morgan, a Labour spokesman on Wales, declared: "What we are witnessing is a struggle over the soul of Wales."

But it was clear, in opinion polls conducted by local newspapers and the South Glamorgan County Council where true passions lay. By three to one the people sent the message that they would rather sing arias in a new stadium than pay to hear them sung in an opera house.

A BBC poll revealed that 88 per cent of respondents disliked the winning design by Zaha Hadid, a London-based architect. Although she beat competition from the best architects in Europe, her design, based she said on the concept of a necklace twisted inwards, was described variously as "an absolute jewel" or "glass Lego bricks".

One unkind American visitor to Cardiff, when shown the plans, dismissed it as a "deconstructed pigsty". Mr Morgan, who is the MP for Cardiff West, claimed her design looked lik the shrine at Mecca and risked a fatwa for blasphemy similar to that faced by Salman Rushdie.

Even among those who favour a grand new opera house to give a permanent home for Welsh National Opera, the Hadid design received a mixed reception. Opinions canvassed from the public by the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation showed that that 39 per cent preferred the "flying saucer" design submitted by Sir Norman Foster with only 33 per cent favouring Ms Hadid's vision.

Among the business community there was strong backing for a futuristic design by the Italian architect Manfredi Nicoletti which, they said, would give Cardiff Bay as powerful a landmark as the Sydney Opera house. People living close to the once notorious Tiger Bay site were overjoyed. Yvonne Samuel, a housewife, said: "This was always a place for ordinary people, not for toffs swanning around spending hundreds of pounds on tickets."

Brian Sullivan, 48, said: "If the Government wants to spend our money on something worthwhile for the next century then put it into a new stadium for Wales. We all love our sport here, who cares about opera?"

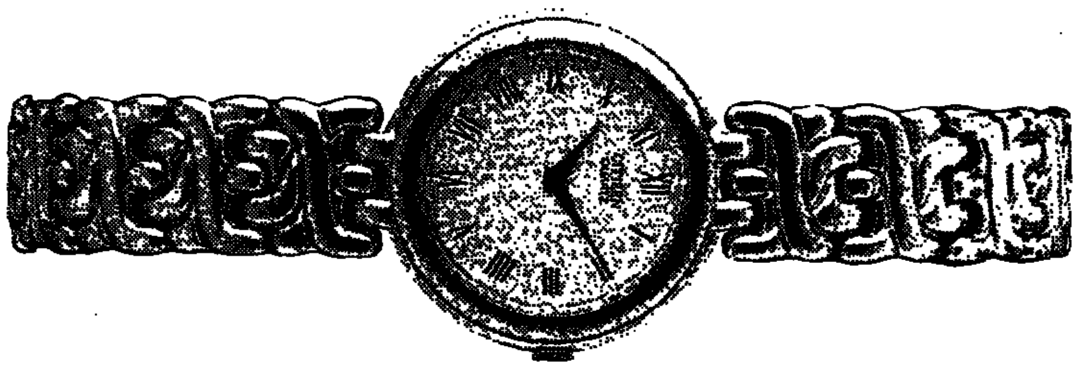
Idris Davies, a newspaper seller, said: "It is the best news I have heard in Cardiff for years. For once, those in London have got it spot on. Give us the stadium."

Last night Ms Hadid, who is best known for a fire station in Germany, said: "I can say only that it is a bitter disappointment."

The proposed opera house, intended to bring new life to the Cardiff Bay area, was designed by Zaha Hadid

THE TEN MILLENNIUM SCHEMES

Royal Botanic Gardens seed bank project (£21.5m)
Llanelli Borough Council, for restoration of coastline and creation of coastal park (£14.5m)
Durham County Council, to restore and conserve limestone cliffs (£4.5m)
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust headquarters at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire (£2.8m)
National Wildflower Centre in Merseyside (£1.6m)
Wargrave village, Berkshire. Creation of access to Thames and new bridge (£240,000)
Four parishes have been given grants for community and village halls: Pensilva, Cornwall (£713,000); Ingleton, County Durham (£150,000); Sully, Glamorgan (£146,500; Moulsoe, Buckinghamshire (£126,000)



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هكذا من الأصل

هدية من الأهل

Three are killed working on special holiday shift to fulfil contract for North Sea gas fields

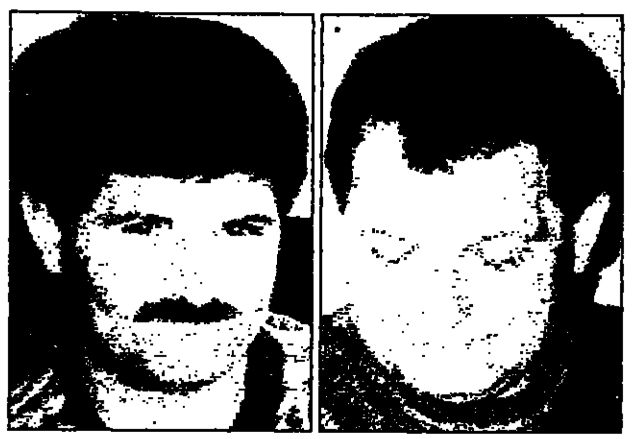
Rig-yard explosion leaves eight children fatherless

By Paul Wilkinson

EIGHT children lost their fathers when three men died in an explosion at an offshore-rig construction yard.

Staff at the Amec site at Howdon, Tyne and Wear, cancelled their works Christmas party last night in deference to the dead men, who were struck by flying shards of metal when a pressure pipe under test on a gas rig exploded.

George Mavin, Amec's marketing director, said: "The mood at the yard is very black, this has been such a terrible shock to all our employees. It would have been a tragedy at any time of year, but it is all the more poignant just a few days before Christmas. Our hearts go out to the families of all the men involved."


Steve Welford, left, was killed outright. Ian Hamilton and another man died later from their injuries

The men died late on Thursday night during the first of special shifts over the holiday period to maintain work on the contract. Steve Welford, 38, a father of two from Whitley Bay, was working closest to the pipe and received the full force of the blast. He was killed outright. Shaun McAlindon, 41, a father of four from Jarrow, and Ian Hamilton, 32, from Hebburn, who has two children, died shortly afterwards from their injuries.

Geraldine Hamilton, 30, said it was her husband's first shift on a 12-day contract at the yard. He had taken the work to pay for a summer holiday in Majorca with their children, Gemma, 11, and Craig, 2. She said: "I wish I had never let him go. I wish I had stopped him going out the front door and then he would still be here with us at Christmas.

"He had to take the job because work for lads on the river is so scarce. Gemma is in a terrible state but little Craig doesn't know what is happening. He has been asking where Daddy is and I have told him he is away making pennies. He asked why I have been crying and I haven't been able to tell him. Craig has seen all the family here and he thinks there is a big party going on, he doesn't know the real story."

Mr Welford's wife, Carole, spent most of the day in bed, overcome with grief. His mother, Ann, cradling his six-month-old son Aaron in her arms, said: "What will he do without him? Everyone is devastated — we just can't believe he has gone."

The accident happened as a group of men worked on a rig bound for the North Sea gas fields. The pipe exploded as they passed nitrogen gas through it at high pressure. Four other men were slightly injured.

The Health and Safety Executive yesterday began an inquiry and Amec announced its own investigation. An Amec spokesman said: "Something went terribly wrong but at this stage we don't know exactly what. The nitrogen was released and the men were caught in the blast." Martin Gannon of the GMB shipyard union said: "The best memorial we could have to them is to learn the lessons from this and make sure it never happens again."

The explosion is the worst to hit the Tyne shipyards and offshore industry since eight men were killed aboard a warship being built at Swan Hunter in 1976. It came as Amec was celebrating the prospect of winning a share of a £2.5 billion contract for up to five nuclear submarines for the Royal Navy. A consortium led by GEC-Marconi, which includes Amec, has been named as the preferred bidder.

TOM FINNIE

Emergency services at the Amec yard near Wallsend after the nitrogen explosion. Two inquiries have begun

Protesters dig in as bypass work is poised to start

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

HUMAN moles were preparing to take on the bulldozers yesterday for what environmentalists believe will be the biggest road battle in Britain. Friends of the Earth, the self-styled Donga Tribe and local action groups expect work on the Newbury bypass to begin at any time.

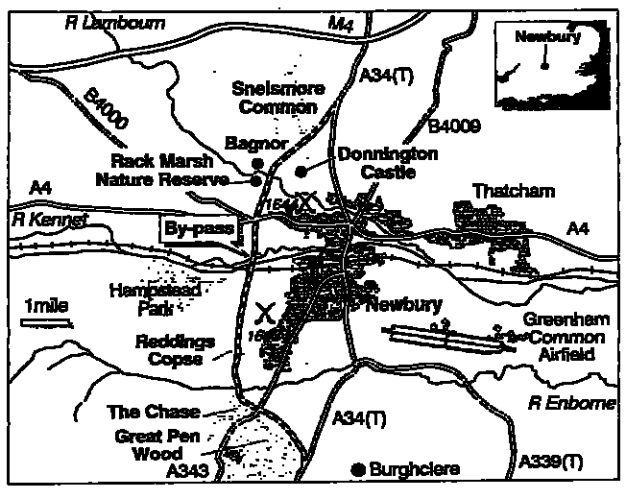
Rebecca Lush, of Road Alert, which orchestrates direct action groups, said campaigners from across Britain were occupying a network of tunnels under Snelsmore Common, one of the beauty spots in the path of construction, day and night.

Ms Lush said: "They will stop the contractors bringing in heavy machinery because the tunnels could collapse, endangering the people inside them."

Other stretches of the route are occupied by tree houses, and the campaigners — veterans of skirmishes at sites including Twyford Down and Pollack in Glasgow — have set up a system called "telephone trees". When the contractors are sighted, telephone calls are made to individuals who in turn telephone two other people, who in turn telephone two others, and so on. Protesters claim they will be able to get thousands of demonstrators on site within half an hour.

The Third Battle of Newbury, as the fight has been billed, follows government approval for the bypass before the Budget, confounding critics' hopes that the scheme would be dropped. The road cuts through three sites of special scientific interest, nature reserves, the roost of pipistrelle bats, the habitat of the protected dormouse and areas of outstanding natural beauty. "It is the most environmentally damaging scheme left in the reduced road-building programme," John Stewart, of Alarm UK, another road protest umbrella group, said.

However the bypass, which has been planned for three decades, is supported by local councils, which claim that Newbury is being killed by heavy goods vehicles and traffic heading from the Midlands to the South Coast ports.



THE SUNDAY TIMES

The Bible: fact or fiction?

The Bible is a cornerstone of western religion and culture. Its epic narratives – from Moses parting the waters of the Red Sea to the humble birth of Jesus in a stable – fire the imagination and inspire awe.

But how much is true? A spate of recent discoveries have started to bring to light many central characters and episodes, but the key religious events remain enigmatic.

In News Review tomorrow, Stuart Wavell sorts fact from fiction

Treasure hunter faces £30,000 legal bill

By Alexandra Williams

A TREASURE hunter who found a Tudor brooch valued at £35,000 has lost a three-year battle to keep it and may have to sell his house to pay the estimated £30,000 legal fees.

Ian Fletcher, 49, found the gold and sapphire pin with a metal detector in Farnham Park, Surrey, in 1992 and took it to the local museum. A coroner ruled that the pin was rightfully Mr Fletcher's because it had probably been lost accidentally and was not treasure trove. But Waverley council, which owns the park, challenged the ruling.

In 1994 the High Court found for Mr Fletcher on the age-old principle of "finders keepers". But the council went to the Court of Appeal which ruled that the council, as a trustee of the parkland on the public's behalf, had a superior right to the pin. This week the House of Lords refused leave for further appeal.

Mr Fletcher, of Liverpool, said: "I honestly declared my find and am now left with a huge bill."

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WORLD OF LEATHER

Why carols have little to do with the Bible

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A CHURCH historian has gathered evidence that few of the best-loved carols are the ancient hymns many think them to be and that many have little or no basis in biblical theology.

The Rev Ian Bradley, a Church of Scotland minister who lectures at Aberdeen University, says *O Come All Ye Faithful* was written as a coded rallying cry for Jacobites. The tune was part of a comic opera performed in Paris in 1744 and the words, believed to be written by the Jacobite supporter John Francis Wade, appeared on the eve of the 1745 rebellion.

Silent Night was composed on Christmas Eve 1818 by an Austrian priest at a small church in the Tyrol when the organ broke down. He and the organist were forced to write a carol that could easily be accompanied by guitar.

Dr Bradley, who will disclose his results in a Christmas Day special on Radio 2, said: "The theory that *O Come All Ye Faithful* could be a Jacobite rallying cry is one that has been put forward before by a number of Catholic historians. What we think is probably the first manuscript is in Latin and is covered with Jacobite cyphers and Stuart symbols. The author was a well-know supporter of the Stuart cause. The fact that it appeared on the eve of the 1745 rebellion of Bonnie Prince Charlie has suggested to historians that it might be a coded rallying cry. 'Come all ye faithful' has a double meaning in that sense."

Dr Bradley, who is putting his research into a book, *Abide with Me*, about the Victorian hymn, and who is editor of the *Penguin Book of Hymns*, said one carol, *Bethlehem Down*, was written when the author was walking between two pubs in Surrey in 1927. "He was really wanting to make money for Christmas to get drunk on. He dreamed up this hymn, sent it to a composer and they did make quite a lot of money."

Charles Wesley's *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* was originally a paean to the environment, beginning "Hark how all the welkin rings" and containing the line: "Universal nature say: Christ the Lord is born today."

Descriptions of cattle lowing and other animals in the stable were unbiblical, Dr Bradley said. Gospel accounts of the nativity gave no hint of the events they described: "Luke mentions nothing of oxen and cattle, yet all sorts of carols refer to them.

"I am very conscious that there is ... a tremendous danger of unpicking the mystery and taking away the wonder of a carol. One of the great joys of hymnody is that it has not been subjected to academic analysis like the Bible. Carols in particular awaken a response of wonder and we do not want to start looking too closely at them."

Bonnie Prince Charlie: summoning the faithful?

Richard Morrison, page 13
Leading article, page 17
At Your Service, Weekend, page 3
Archbishop of Canterbury, Magazine, page 8

The nativity gives Christianity a compelling spiritual force

A birth that is key to understanding mankind's relationship with God

Credo

Richard Harries

It was good this Christmas to receive cards from my Jewish and Muslim friends. One of the cards from a Muslim had a quotation from the Koran on it: "We sent Jesus the Son of Mary, confirming the law that had come before him. We sent him the Gospel: and therein was guidance and light."

It is still not widely enough recognised that Islam reveres Jesus. In practice a devout Muslim will have a greater reverence for him than millions of nominal Christians. Although mainstream Judaism has no place for Jesus (understandable in the light of the tragic history between the two religions), some individual thinkers are certainly ready to acknowledge the role of Jesus in the providence of God, bringing monotheism to the Gentile world.

This view of Jesus, as an inspired prophet with a very special place in the purpose of God, is one that is easy to understand and, for that reason, has obvious appeal. It is no doubt one with which many people in our culture, brought up as Christians, sympathise.

The orthodox view, however, is that, in Jesus, God Himself is present in some unique way. This belief, almost impossible to understand, has given rise to endless theological conundrums about the two natures of Christ and the Trinity and to many today seems frankly incredible. So how can Christians celebrate with integrity not just the birth of a prophet but the divine Saviour?

For me it has to do with the age-old problem of suffering. This has always placed a large question mark against the idea of a wise and loving power behind the universe but in the 20th century the question is loud and insistent. For us it seems that God Himself is on trial.

Whereas for the past thousand years Europeans have felt themselves to be under divine judgment, today it is God himself who is subject to critical scrutiny. Given the terrible toll of suffering, was he justified in creating us in the first place? Given the world as it is, why does he not seem to do more to avert its worst disasters?

There are no knock-down answers, but Christians continue to live with the questions in faith on the basis of two convictions. First, the intuition that despite everything life is a blessing not a curse.

Secondly, God has not simply set creation going and then stood back; moment by moment he both holds it in being and enters into its struggles. As the focus and extreme expression of that entering in, God exposes himself to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. He becomes as vulnerable as a child and eventually dies a criminal's death.

I agree with the poet R.S. Thomas when he said in a BBC interview: "I am a Christian because I think Christianity is the most profound and satisfactory answer to the great problem of suffering. I don't think even in this late stage of the 20th century there is anything more contemporary than the cross. I would not be content to find an answer to the problem of suffering which didn't involve God." In Jesus God experiences human life from within, as vulnerable, as subject to events, as the object of vilification.

This is difficult to understand, even more difficult to believe. Yet it is what makes Christianity distinctive and gives it its compelling spiritual force. So that despite the very mixed record of the Church as an institution and the failures of those who call ourselves Christians, something of the radiance of this divine humility can still glow in our darkness. God may still stand in the dock on trial for creating us as we are, but he does so as a fellow victim.

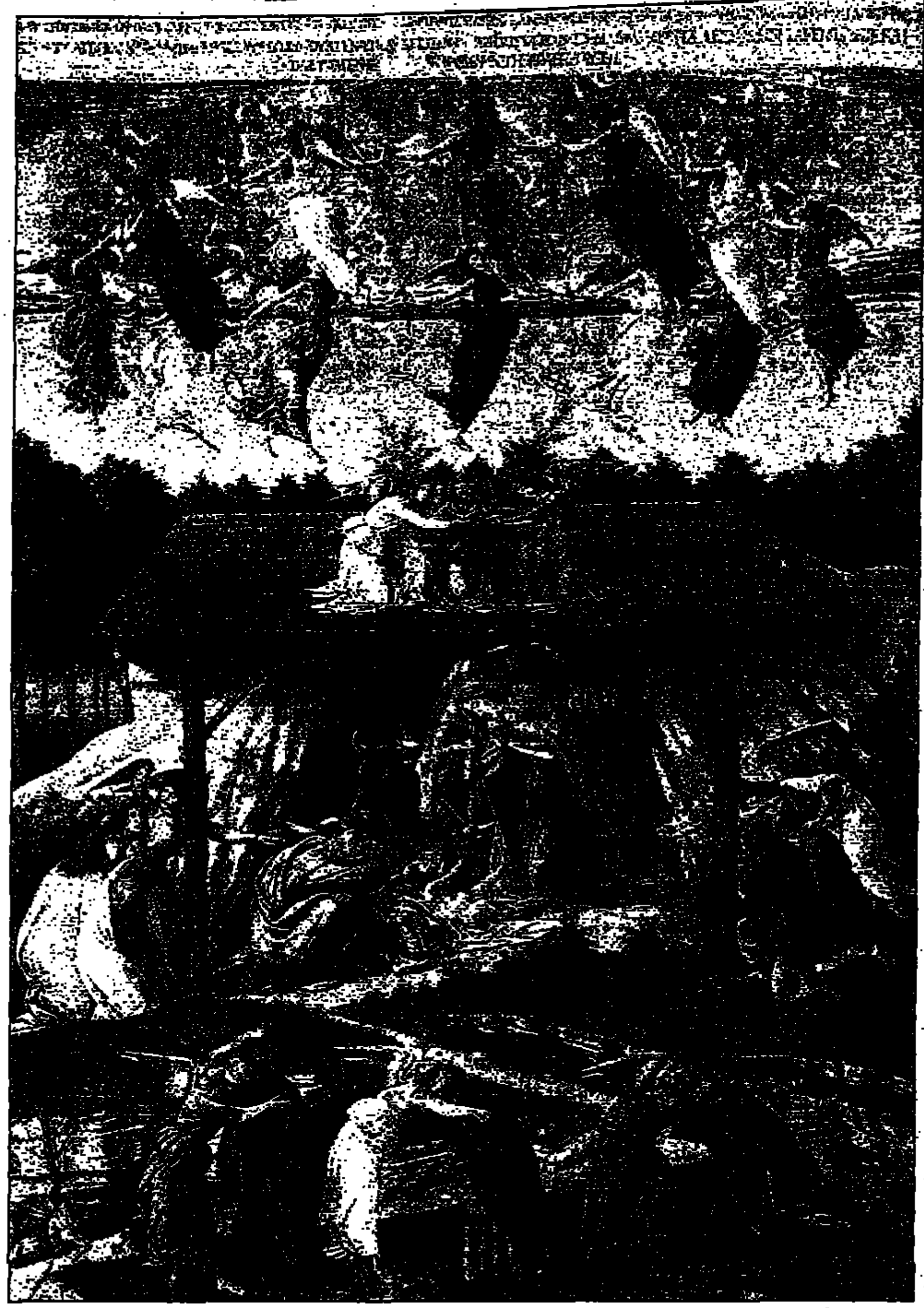
The emphasis Christianity puts on the unique Sonship of Christ can seem to distance him from the rest of us. But his birth needs to be seen as part of the total sweep of Christian truth.

This is that we too are destined to become truly sons of God, if we will have it; made in God's image, we are called to share his likeness.

As Saint Irenaeus, who died in 202, put it: "In his unbounded love, God became what we are, that he might make us what he is." This idea of divinisation, or *theosis*, is fundamental to the Eastern Church even though it has not received its proper prominence in the West.

Even in this wider perspective there is a fundamental difficulty in speaking about the Incarnation at all. In order to say anything meaningful, we have to relate it to our own experience. So we suggest that Christ's Sonship is in some way similar to ours.

But if that is all that is said, we evacuate Christian faith of its central tenet. On the other hand, if we stress the fact that Christ's Sonship is totally unlike ours, we push it out of our intellectual and imaginative reach. The answer may lie in our experience of Sonship through Christ's Sonship. We live as children of God in relation to our Heavenly Father, but we do this "In Christ", in a relationship grounded in his divine Sonship. It is in order to realise our true Sonship, that the Son of God comes among us. It is this coming of God among us that makes us see God in a new way, that makes us see the matter very differently.



The birth of Jesus depicted by Botticelli in *The Mystic Nativity*, painted in 1500

The Right Rev Richard Harries is Bishop of Oxford. His Gallery of Reflections: The Nativity in Art *has just been published by Lion/BRF*

Forces fly festive flag for Britain

BY MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

SIXTY THOUSAND servicemen and women are abroad and in Northern Ireland this Christmas.

The expanded peacekeeping assignment in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the commitment in Northern Ireland, where 16,500 members of the Army, Royal Navy and RAF are still on operational duty, will continue to pose manpower challenges in 1996.

British soldiers are preparing to mark their fourth Christmas in Bosnia. By January 17, troop levels will have risen to 13,000, the highest since the war began.

A Royal Navy task force, consisting of the carrier *HMS Illustrious*, a frigate, *HMS London*, and two Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels, *Fort Grange* and *Olwen*, was until recently scheduled to spend Christmas on port visits. However, after the Bosnia peace agreement was signed in Paris, the four-ship task force was ordered to remain on operational duty in the Adriatic and Christmas leave was cancelled.

Two other frigates, *HMS Beaver* and *HMS Brazen*, are on duty in the Adriatic under Nato command in support of the UN arms embargo. About 700 RAF personnel are also working in the region to support the Nato-led peace implementation force at bases in Bosnia, Croatia and Italy.

Elsewhere in the world, the frigate *HMS Brave* is the West Indies guardship off Tampa in Florida, helping to counter drugs smuggling.

Despite the military rundown in Hong Kong ahead of 1997, there is still a garrison of 2,500 troops and 200 RAF personnel in the colony. The patrol vessel *HMS Peacock* is also on duty to combat smuggling.

Two submarines are known to be at sea this Christmas, *HMS Triumph*, a nuclear-powered "hunter killer", and either a Polaris or a new Trident ballistic missile boat, operating somewhere in the North Atlantic.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Seasonal mail hits record

The Post Office is having its busiest Christmas and will have delivered almost 1.9 billion cards and letters by tomorrow. John Roberts, the chief executive, said yesterday that an extra 70 million items had been handled this year.

Last Monday, 127 million letters were dealt with by the Royal Mail, a record in its 350-year history. "Thanks to state-of-the-art technology and the hard work of employees, we expect all the mail posted by recommended dates to arrive in time for Christmas." Mr Roberts said.

Labour takeover

Labour has taken control of Daventry District Council in Northamptonshire for the first time in its 21-year history after Dr Paula Jones, a Tory councillor, resigned to become an independent. Labour now has 15 seats to the Tories' 14 and has claimed most of the chairmanships.

Jury disagrees

A retrial is to be held of Nicholas Farnell, 32, who killed a neighbour in a row over a barking dog. The jury at Winchester Crown Court was discharged after being unable to agree on a verdict. Mr Farnell, of Waterlooville, Hampshire, denies murder but admits manslaughter.

Bleeped out

The Government has accepted claims by residents of Wembury Bay, near Plymouth, that a new radar installation at the *HMS Cambridge* base was interfering with their hearing aids. Further studies will be carried out by the Defence Radiological Protection Service.

Court ban

Plymouth City Council obtained a court injunction banning Dean Pope, 18, alleged to be the leader of a gang which has terrorised residents of the North Prospect housing estate, from entering the area. Police are considering whether to bring charges.

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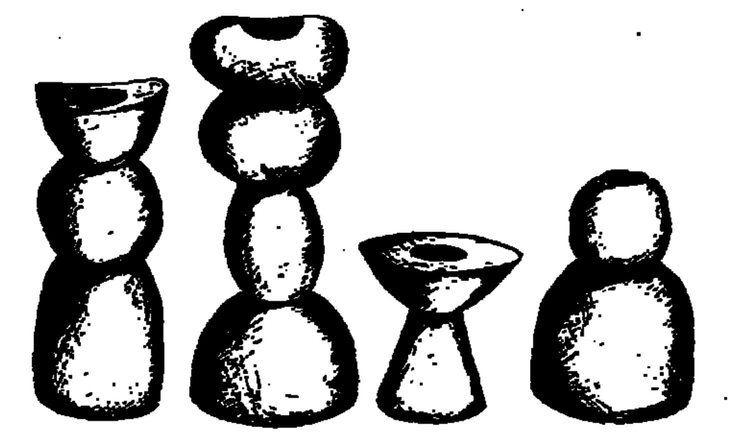

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هكذا من الأصل

هدية من الاهل

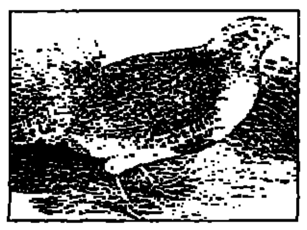
Prices go a-leaping for what my true love sent to me

By Robin Young

THE cost of true love has soared by more than 80 per cent this Christmas. The total price of the gifts catalogued in the song *The Twelve Days of Christmas* has leapt like its 12 lords to £14,837 from last year's £8,169.

The Times has calculated the sum each year since the exercise was initiated by the World Wildlife Fund in 1973, when the total was £2,816.60.

Only the partridges are cheaper than last year, when they cost £4.50. This year's cost £3.99 from Tesco, whose supermarkets could also have supplied French hens (oven-ready) at a price unchanged since 1993 of £1.49 a lb (now called £3.28 a kg). Our true lover insisted, though, on going for the comeliest of fully-feathered live French hens, *salmon faverolles* from Sue Bruton of the Faverolle Club, at £20 each.


Only the partridge was cheaper than last year

He also agreed with Alan Dawson, a leading supplier of aviary-bred colly birds, or blackbirds, that he would purchase rarer coloured mutations. Mr Dawson says that specially bred silver, cinnamon or satinette blackbirds start at £100 each, and that he never really sells his ordinary blackbirds anyway. They are used to foster chicks of the fancier types.

True turtle doves have always been unobtainable. This year, at the suggestion of Dr David Alderton, an authority on pigeons and doves, our purchaser substituted Chinese necklace doves at £40 a pair.

Last year gold rings were found at £4.99 but this year we could not do better than £14 for a lady's dress ring from a branch of H. Samuel.

Geese a-laying are a problem, since Michael Roberts of the Domestic Fowl Trust points out they do not really start laying until February. A farmyard goose, he says, would be £20 and a thoroughbred Toulouse £100, but it is cheaper and more convenient to adopt the geese from the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

The trust has temporarily stopped its barnacle goose adoption scheme, so our shopper reverted to more expensive Hawaiian ne-nes at £20 each. Sponsoring wild Bewick's or whooper swans is unchanged at £25 each.

Equity's quote for 11 ladies dancing, drawn from first-year members of the corps of the Royal Ballet, rose to £250 each, a week's pay to cover the nights on which they were billed to appear and time to rehearse and to attend classes.

The lords a-leaping have traditionally been allowed to claim the maximum daily expenses they could have if attending the House of Lords, up a £1 since August 1 at £33. If their athletic efforts involved an overnight stay the sum would have risen to £74 each, and if they could prove they needed secretarial assistance to get airborne that would add a further £31.

THE COST OF TWELVE DAYS' GIFTS

	1994	1995
A partridge	£54	£47.88
In a pear tree, on 12 days	£108	£150
Two turtle doves, on 11 days	£330	£440
Three French hens, on 10 days	£117.30	£600
Four colly birds, on 9 days	£720	£3,600
Five gold rings, on 8 days	£199.60	£560
Six geese a-laying, on 7 days	£630	£840
Seven swans a-swimming, on 6 days	£1,050	£1,050
Eight maids a-milking, for 5 days	£110.40	£113.60
Nine drummers drumming, on 4 days	£1,242	£2,340
Ten pipers piping, on 3 days	£1,035	£1,950
Eleven ladies dancing, for 2 days	£2,189	£2,750
Twelve lords a-leaping, day's expenses	£384	£396
Total over 12 days	£8,169.30	£14,837.48

Bill keeps pace with inflation

Fancy wrapping puts extra £5 on family festivities

By Robin Young

THE bill for the average family's Christmas festivities has gone up by £5 this year. While the increase — a little more than 2.5 per cent — is roughly in line with inflation, it is largely down to new, and more expensive, fashions in gift wrapping.

The bill, recalculated annually by *The Times*, topped £200 for the first time last year. This year it has reached £205.53.

The index was devised by a Conservative MP who went on to become Minister for Consumer Affairs and chairwoman of the National Consumer Council. In 1973 Baroness Oppenheim-Barnes, then Sally Oppenheim, Tory MP for Gloucester, added up the cost of providing a married couple and two children with all the trimmings to £34.89½.

Mrs Oppenheim claimed in 1977 that under a Labour Government the cost of Christmas had doubled since 1973, and produced a costed shopping list to prove it. *The Times* has recosted the same items regularly since 1978, revisiting the same north London supermarket to compare prices.

Many things have happened to complicate the calculations in the intervening years. Metrication and changing habits have induced manufacturers to abandon some of the weights Mrs Oppenheim specified. Where equivalents are no longer available, it is assumed for the purpose of the calculation that the average family has no choice but to buy the closest alternative.

It is becoming difficult to find a half-pound box of chocolates: the most visible ones in the shop were attached to 1lb 7oz cartons of Quality Street as a free bonus. Manufacturers no longer make 40oz Christmas cakes, or 1½lb puddings. Our prices were reached by adding a third to the price of a 30oz cake, and half to the price of a 1lb pudding.

On the other hand, being average, the hypothetical are not given the chance of "luxury" or "premium" qualities when something more basic is offered.

The three bottles of spirits are now supermarkets' own labels (all three noticeably cheaper than last year), but all are 5cl smaller than they were in 1973 when the standard bottle size was still 75cl. To judge by the shelves, though, litres are more popular these days.

The solitary pint of beer — always a curiosity since Mrs Oppenheim's average family consumes three bottle of spirits but only one pint of beer — comes from a British supermarket, not Calais or a pub. Even so the price, achieved by extracting a single unit from a multipack, could have been anything from 56.5p to £1.77.

The sharp increase in the price of wrapping is because the supermarket now sells only more expensive gift-wrap in large rolls. On the other hand, we did find a bargain box of Christmas cards, which gave us 40 for less than the price of last year's 24.

The supermarket no longer sells Christmas trees, so the price was taken from the nearest greengrocer still supplying them.

As always, it would be possible to buy many of the goods cheaper from discount stores or market stalls. Toy prices, in particular, vary widely from outlet to outlet, and it has to be doubted whether average children would still be content with the meagre choice of games and toys available in our supermarket. The figure we spent on toys is close to the national average per child, but is supposed to be for two.

THE COST OF CHRISTMAS

	1973	1993	1994	1995
Turkey, 14lb fresh	£7.06	£13.86	£13.86	£15.26
Mince pies, 6	12p	59p	59p	58p
Christmas pudding, 1½lb	34p	£2.82	£2.99	£2.84
Christmas cake, 40oz	90p	£4.50	£5.49	£5.99
Brussels sprouts, 1½lb	12p	52½p	85p	£1.04
Potatoes, 3lb	7½p	30p	59p	£1.14
Chocolates, ½lb	40p	£1.49	£1.59	£1.89
Assorted nuts, ½lb	17p	49½p	89p	67p
Christmas tree, 5ft	60p	£25	£18.50	£17.50
Tree lights	99p	£6.99	£6.99	£7.49
Tinsel	60p	£1.45	£1.69	£1.99
Christmas crackers	49p	£4.49	£5.49	£7.99
Bottle of gin	£2.45	£8.95	£9.29	£8.74
Bottle of whisky	£2.39	£8.95	£8.89	£8.72
Bottle of brandy	£4.44	£9.59	£9.39	£9.20
Pint of beer	19p	69½p	74p	85p
24 Christmas cards	60p	£2.49	£2.88	£1.99
5 sheets wrapping paper	15p	59p	69p	£4.95
Postage, first class x 24	84p	£6	£6	£6
Toys and games	£10.95	£81.16	£89.85	£87.50
Parcel post, 4 x 2kg	£1.08	£13	£13.20	£13.20
Total	£34.89½	£193.93½	£200.45	£205.53

SIMON WALKER

Margaret Csillag, co-ordinator of tuition at the Royal Marsden Hospital's children's unit, teaching geography to William and and Fleur

Biochemist who brings the classroom into hospital

By John Young

THE TIMES Christmas Appeal in aid of the Royal Marsden Hospital

THE ready smile and extrovert charm of Margaret Csillag are clearly priceless assets in her demanding job. Her task is to convince authorities that children in long-term hospital care need to lead as normal a life as possible and in particular that their education should not suffer.

"The assumption used to be that children with cancer were too ill to do schoolwork," she says. "I never accepted that. A child undergoing chemotherapy can be very sick one day and eager to get on with lessons the next."

Mrs Csillag is co-ordinator for paediatric education services for the London Borough of Sutton, having worked for the council since 1976. In 1989 she was asked to set up an educational service in the Royal Marsden Hospital's children's cancer unit in the borough. There had previously been no facilities for children in the hospital to be taught; they were simply expected to make up the lost time later.

She began her career as a biochemist in cancer research at the Royal Marsden's senior branch in Fulham. She became a teacher but was delighted to be asked back to work in a hospital.

She has a shoestring budget. The unit employs just two part-time teachers; and Mrs Csillag herself has little time for teaching. There is no proper classroom, so teaching has to take place in the consultants' meeting-room. For equipment, she has had to rely on voluntary fundraising. Teachers have to cope with everything from small children learning to read and pupils who do not speak English to teenagers studying for A level.

Moral support has come from the National Association for the Education of Sick Children, which has lobbied for better facilities. Every summer Mrs Csillag runs seminars for teachers from across the country on the problems cancer causes.

Many of the children are very bright, she says. "It is marvellous when children come back and say they were here ten years ago and now they are doing their A levels or are at university. That gives me hope, because there are bad patches when you lose three or four children, and that is very hard to take.

"One boy did nine GCSEs — and died two weeks after he entered the sixth form. But his mother felt satisfied that he had achieved something. Most children want to go on with their education, because it gives them a sense of purpose and normality."

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THE TIMES Christmas Appeal in aid of the Royal Marsden Hospital

Shelters promise brief good cheer for street people

By Tim Jones

CRISIS, the charity for the homeless, will invite thousands of people in from the cold today to spend the Christmas season in some warmth and comfort at its centres.

Thirty-three day services and shelters are being set up from Aberdeen to Portsmouth. In the shelters over the next six days some 4,000 people who normally sleep on streets will be given three meals a day and a turkey dinner on Christmas Day with hats and crackers. They will be able to take showers and will be given clothing. They will be offered medical and dental care and help from opticians, chiropodists and hairdressers as well as advice on housing and benefits.

At the main centre, a disused supermarket in Wandsworth, south London, Crisis has provided camp beds for 500. Michelle Dixon of Crisis said the charity was alarmed that shelters were having to be provided in places such as Canterbury, Cheltenham and Milton Keynes, regarded as the heart of prosperous middle England. Crisis says the number of shelters around Britain demonstrates the growing plight of the homeless.

Some street people, however, shun the centres, partly because they fear their doorway or regular patch will be taken if they leave. In London they will be fed three times a day from a van that will tour four areas of the city. After a full English breakfast, they will dine on hamburgers and beans or stew, which is popular among the older men and women. They will also be offered plenty of fresh fruit, chocolate, sweets and soft drinks.

Other charities, such as Centrepoint and London Connection are also laying on Christmas parties for young homeless people. A recent survey by Crisis showed that homeless people feel particularly lonely and vulnerble at Christmas when they are more likely to be depressed and suicidal.

Pets have not been forgotten. Vets from the National Canine Defence League will be touring London to give first aid, food treats, leads and collars to dogs that are often the only friends of lonely and homeless people.

Selena Makepeace, for the league, said many homeless people would not go into shelters because they did not cater for dogs. "Faced with the choice of a warm bed and a good meal or losing their best friend, they choose to remain on the streets.

"A dog is for many of them the most important thing they have in life. They give their owners unconditional love and loyalty."

She said that generally, because their owners could not afford to overfeed them, the dogs were in good condition. "But if there is a problem, the owners cannot afford fees so our vets will be giving them basic first aid. We will also be offering a neutering service to try to control the growing problem of stray and unwanted dogs."

Drink-drive campaigns bypass the middle-aged

By Richard Ford
Home Correspondent

OLDER motorists are more likely to ignore warnings about drinking and driving at Christmas than younger people, according to a survey published today. Seventy five per cent of drivers aged 17 to 25 claimed never to drink and drive, but 59 per cent of motorists aged 25 and over said they were more likely to drive after drinking.

The figures support the change in attitude over the past two decades in which a series of advertising campaigns have stressed the antisocial nature of drinking and driving. The police and the advertising industry have been concerned that the annual Christmas drink-drive campaign is not reaching the middle-aged and the elderly. This year's Department of Transport campaign is aimed primarily at young drivers.

Jim Wallace, marketing director of Privilege Insurance, for whom MORI carried out the survey, said: "The figures do substantiate the change in attitudes over the last 20 years. Young drivers have grown up with drink-drive legislation which was first launched in 1967 with the introduction of the breath test.

"Coupled with government television campaigns, the legislation has definitely helped to create positive peer pressure, preventing young drivers from drinking."

The number of road deaths from drink-related accidents fell from about 1,500 in the early 1980s to well under half that number in 1994.

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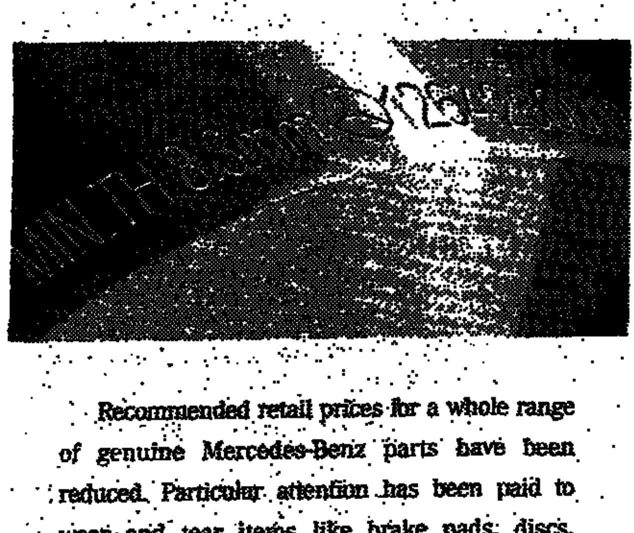

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'Even if the fighting in Afghanistan stops tomorrow, there will be mine victims for 1,000 years'

Fate of thousands in Kabul depends on British nurse

From Michael Dynes in Kabul

ANNIE SEWELL, the British-born nurse who masterminds the Red Cross's vast medical operation in the besieged city of Kabul, has a reputation for getting things done.

In a city of one million inhabitants, where 85 per cent of the buildings have been reduced to rubble, where most of the people are freezing, and where everyone is subject to the daily gauntlet of random shelling, you have to be a bit pushy to make an impact.

Yet the fate of thousands of men, women and children depend on this former National Health Service nurse, who trained at St Thomas's Hospital, London, and who spent 15 months in Sarajevo escorting relief convoys. On her shoulders rests the responsibility for breaching the siege of Kabul so that the capital's hospitals are supplied with the equipment needed to piece together their shattered lives.

Waiting for the first land convoy to arrive from Jalalabad for three years, her anxiety is palpable. "We're expecting six Red Cross trucks loaded with 40 tonnes of medical supplies which we need desperately," she said. "It's going to be a tough winter if the local warlords decide not to let it through."

When the six lorries finally arrive at the Red Cross's Karte Parwan warehouse, next door to the old British embassy complex, Miss Sewell is on site to take control. Her first problem is to reassure the Afghan drivers that they will be reimbursed for the backhanders they had to pay the local warlords to secure safe passage. Her second is to ensure that the convoy is rapidly broken up and dispersed before it is wiped out by a single rocket.

As the long-awaited medical supplies, ranging from huge bales of gauze for dressing wounds to the latest drugs for treating dysentery and diarrhoea, are unloaded by a gang of undernourished market porters, Miss Sewell betrays the first sign of despair.

"The last time I was here in 1992, the Mujahidin were in the hills, President Najibullah was about to fall, and we all thought that that would be the end of it," she said. "Three years later, there has been more devastation, more destruction, and more killing than in the whole 16 years of war. I see no end to it. Everyone is cold and hungry, and there is no end in sight."

The job was much easier last time. "We had electricity then. Now there's no power, not even for the traffic lights. So many different groups have shelled the city over the past 16 years. But the hospitals have always been full, mostly of children," she said.

In the children's ward of the Karte-e-Charn hospital, one of four supplied by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Miss Sewell takes us on a tour, indicating the young casualties. There, beneath the peeling paint and the sandbagged windows, lay row after row of silent children displaying their amputated legs and arms, while being nursed by their anguished mothers. All were victims of the estimated six to seven million landmines laid in the capital, making Kabul the most heavily mined city in history.

For these child mine victims, whose bodies are still growing, the agony can last until their late teens. When the bone begins to pierce the stump, they have to return to hospital for further surgery, and a new artificial limb.

The cost of making a new leg for a below-the-knee amputation is around $120 (£78), compared to the $1 cost of the mine that removed it in the first place. There are about 50,000 amputees in Afghanistan. Even if the fighting stops tomorrow, said Miss Sewell, and there is little chance of that, "there will be mine victims for a thousand years".

☐ **Peace hopes:** Alahuddin Brujerdi, the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, said during a visit to Kabul yesterday he is "more optimistic" about the prospects of brokering a peace for Afghanistan as the warring factions now seemed keener to negotiate. *(AFP)*

RED CROSS APPEAL

Donations to the Red Cross appeal for Afghanistan should be sent to: British Red Cross Afghanistan Appeal, Freepost, London SW1X 7BR. Credit card donations: 0171 201 5010.

The Red Cross yesterday received a single donation of £50,000 towards its appeal, after the coverage given by *The Times* on Wednesday.

ADRIAN BROOKS

Annie Sewell, a former NHS nurse, oversees the huge Red Cross operation in war-battered Kabul "where everyone is cold and hungry"

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Rescuers battle to find bomb survivors

From AFP in Peshawar

RESCUE teams fought flames and panic in Peshawar yesterday as they sought to reach possible survivors from a car bomb that killed 60 people and injured 200 in the Pakistani city's main market.

Army, police and paramilitary troops were called in to help rescuers after the 55lb bomb exploded in the city's Sadar bazzar late on Thursday. The dead included the daughter, granddaughter and grandson and the chauffeur of Khurshid Ali Khan, the provincial Governor. The daughter and nephew of Ataullah Jan, the provincial Transport Minister, were also killed.

Survivors were believed to be trapped in the debris of a multistorey department store ripped apart by the blast. The subsequent fire was finally brought under control late yesterday.

Witnesses said the explosion completely destroyed six buildings, while more than 100 shops in a radius of half a mile were badly damaged. The blast plunged the city, the capital of the North West Frontier Province, into darkness and power remained disconnected yesterday.

Rescuers recovered the body of a baby girl from the debris early yesterday while several bodies were found in wrecked cars. The streets were littered with glass.

A massive security crackdown was ordered as an investigation into the disaster continued, officials said. No one has claimed responsibility for the blast, although Masud Shah, the provincial police chief, indicated that he suspected Afghan terrorists.

Benazir Bhutto, the Prime Minister, vowed to continue her struggle against extremists. "Such dastardly acts will not deter us from pursuing principled policies and justice," she said. The provincial government yesterday announced a reward of one million rupees (£18,600) for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for the blast.

Dissident Wei files appeal against jail term for sedition

From James Pringle in Peking

WEI JINGSHENG, China's best known dissident, who was jailed last week for 14 years for attempting to overthrow the Government, formally appealed yesterday against a sentence that would put him behind bars until he is almost 60 years old.

A former Nobel Peace Prize nominee and electrician at Peking Zoo, Wei became the father of China's human rights movement during the 1978-9 Democracy Wall protests. He served what became almost 15 years of solitary confinement as a result, and was convicted on December 13 of sedition after a trial lasting a few hours.

Peking-based diplomats said last night there was little chance that the latest verdict against Wei would be overturned. "I would expect it to be upheld," said one foreign envoy. "I know of no previous case where a dissident's appeal succeeded."

A spokesman for the Peking Higher People's Court confirmed that the court had received the appeal, but was unable to say when the case against the man who became the boldest critic of the Chinese Communist Party would be heard.

Chinese lawyers said the appeals court was unlikely to hold a hearing, but would probably review evidence and other documents. Theoretically, it could uphold the lower court's verdict and sentence, cut the sentence or order a retrial. The first option was the most likely in a process that could take six weeks, lawyers said. However, the appeals court could not lengthen the jail term.

The latest charges related to Wei's activities during a brief period when he was out of prison on parole in late 1993 and early last year. During that time Peking was hoping to be chosen to host the Olympics in 2000. Wei vanished into legal limbo on April 1 last year after meeting John Shattuck, Assistant US Secretary of State for Human Rights.

The verdict handed down last week stipulates that Wei must be incarcerated until November 20, 2009, when he will be 59. The judge in the case, Wang Ming, later said that Wei's sentence was lenient.

Charges against Wei, according to official reports, included allegations of illegal fundraising to finance his political campaigning and anti-government propaganda.

Hong Kong supporters carry boxes of Christmas cards for Wei Jingsheng, left portrait, and Wang Dan, right

Papandreou icon plan scrapped

From Malcolm Brabant in Athens

SOCIALIST Party officials have dissuaded Greece's First Lady from flying a sacred icon to Athens in a desperate attempt to save the life of her husband, Andreas Papandreou, the Prime Minister.

Mimi Papandreou wanted to bring the icon of the Virgin Mary from its sanctuary on Tinos to the intensive care unit of the Onassis Heart Centre, where Mr Papandreou is critically ill. She has made several pilgrimages to the island after becoming convinced that the figure's powers helped her husband to recover from open heart surgery in London in 1988.

The guardians of this religious treasure were prepared to send it to Athens, but only if the normal protocol was observed. It would have meant laying on a guard of honour with a full military band saluting the icon when it reached the mainland.

This was too much for government officials, who are already embarrassed by stories that Mrs Papandreou is surrounded by astrologers and strange priests, and has apparently asked a Russian herbal expert to treat the Prime Minister.

Perhaps it was the icon's track record that convinced Mrs Papandreou to call off the plans. It has left Tinos only twice, to try to save the ailing King Paul of Greece and to help Athens Panathanaikos football team in a match at Wembley. King Paul died and Panathanaikos lost.

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Bleak Christmas for Americans on benefit as budget deadlock drags on

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER
IN WASHINGTON

MORE than four and a half million poor families will not receive their Christmas welfare cheques as the American budget standoff continued last night.

Military veterans will also feel the pinch, putting further pressure on President Clinton who was holding a White House meeting with congressional leaders in a final attempt to resolve the crisis before Christmas.

However, the House of Representatives despaired of a quick breakthrough and voted to adjourn until next Wednesday. Congressmen headed for Washington's airports leaving behind a Government partially shut down for a record seventh day and a mounting human toll.

Benefit cheques to 3.3 million military veterans were not sent out on Thursday. Welfare payments to 4.7 million poor families did not go out yesterday. The 260,000 government workers laid off since last Saturday will only be paid retrospectively.

Seasonal fund-raising by Washington's charities has been wretched. Relatives of the victims of the Lockerbie bombing were unable to lay seventh-anniversary wreaths at the new memorial in Arlington Cemetery because it was closed. Nasa has been unable to release long-awaited data on Jupiter's atmosphere, sent home by the Galileo space probe, and magnificent Vermeer and Winslow Homer exhibitions hang unseen behind the National Gallery's locked doors.

Compounding the rapidly increasing bitterness between the Republican Congress and the Democratic White House, the Senate yesterday joined the House to override a presidential veto for the first time since Mr Clinton took office. By 68 votes to 30, it reinstated a Bill limiting securities fraud lawsuits.

Mr Clinton, for his part, vowed to veto as too harsh sweeping Republican legislation to reform the welfare system that the Senate approved, by 52 votes to 47, yesterday, and the House approved, by 245 votes to 178, on Thursday. The Bill would return responsibility for welfare to the states, end automatic entitlements, force recipients back to work after two years, penalise unmarried teenage mothers and limit overall spending.

Taking matters into their own hands, a bipartisan group of 20 moderate senators managed to agree to a plan to balance the budget in seven years by halving the Republicans' proposed tax cuts, softening their proposed cuts in social spending and measuring inflation more conservatively to save billions of dollars on inflation-linked social security payments.

However, House Republicans are in no mood to compromise. They believe they will seal their place in history — and be forgiven by the voters — if they can produce a genuinely balanced budget for the first time since the late 1960s and finally reverse 60 years of relentless government expansion.

"The bipartisan Senate can do whatever it wants to, but that won't sell in the House," Thomas DeLay, the Republican House whip, said of the senators' plan. "The walk's pretty tough, and it's pretty uphill," said Robert Dole, the Senate leader, before last night's White House meeting.

Congress is due to return next week if the impasse continues. This would be the first time since 1963 it has had to sit in the week between Christmas and New Year.

Celebration at the White House

PRESIDENT Clinton, his wife, and daughter Chelsea will spend a quiet holiday at home surrounded by the elaborate decorations of the White House. This year the theme was inspired by the Clement Moore poem *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. The traditional State Dining Room gingerbread house, created by the White House pastry chef, is this year a replica of Mrs Clinton's childhood home in Wisner Street, Park Ridge, Illinois.

Clinton surrenders Whitewater papers

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE White House surrendered subpoenaed documents yesterday that explicitly revealed officials had tried to obtain inside information about supposedly independent federal inquiries into Whitewater.

At least one note proved the White House intention to discover detailed intelligence about sensitive investigations into the failed Arkansas land venture, fuelling Republican suspicions of a cover-up and keeping Whitewater on the political agenda well into President Clinton's re-election campaign next year.

Bowing to extreme pressure from Congress, the White House finally released the 13 pages of notes with the insistence that they would demonstrate merely a "long and wild goose chase" by Republicans in trying to implicate Mr Clinton and his wife.

The papers, from a November 1993 meeting between Mr Clinton's lawyers and aides, were surrendered to Alfonse D'Amato, chairman of the Senate special committee on Whitewater. They were expected to spark swift condemnation from leading Republicans in Congress.

Mr D'Amato said he would consider more subpoenas, adding: "These documents provide many more questions. Questions just jump out of the pages."

But a day after Mr Clinton said he was "dying" to submit the memoranda, rejecting all comparisons of a Watergate-style operation, the White House remained convinced the documents would exonerate him. Mark Fabiani, an associate White House counsel, said: "These notes, together with the more than 35,000 pages of documents we have produced to the Senate committee, will allow Americans to judge the fullness of our cooperation, and the nakedly partisan motives of those who continue to replough old ground in the hopes of kicking up some mud."

The notes' release ended the possibility of a constitutional clash in the courts. Mr Clinton had claimed attorney-client privilege for not making them public and the Senate voted along party lines to sue the Administration for their release. In the pact, the House of Representatives and the White House agreed to disagree on the attorney-client privilege issue since the Republicans do not view the notes as privileged material.

But they do believe the papers could provide insights into whether White House aides provided Mr Clinton's personal lawyers with confidential information about politically sensitive inquiries involving the First Couple, a revelation that would prove damaging in advance of the campaign season. It would also contradict the sworn testimony of Bernard Nussbaum, the former White House counsel.

"It is the circumstances of the notes' disclosure, and the possible further inquiry that could take place, that are likely to be more significant than the notes themselves," said Jim Leach, Republican chairman of the House Banking Committee, who had struck the deal for disclosure with Jack Quinn, the senior White House lawyer.

As early as 1993, Mr Clinton's lawyers inside and outside the White House were "trying to find out what's going on in the investigation", according to an early release of the notes, taken in the barely legible handwriting of William Kennedy, the White House lawyer.

Separately, Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel on Whitewater, said his investigation may last for at least another year — but he thought all facts would be public before the November election.

Anti-Iran funds perplex CIA

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

NEWT GINGRICH has secured reluctant White House approval for a $20 million (£13 million) programme of covert action against Iran, but the CIA has little idea of how to spend the money.

The House Speaker prevailed after holding up the intelligence community's $28 billion budget Bill for several weeks, but the CIA believes the programme will be a waste of money and achieve little. America's last serious attempt to influence events in Tehran ended ignominiously in the Iran-Contra scandal.

Mr Gingrich has waged a long personal crusade again Iran, calling it "the most dangerous country in the world" and a "permanent, long-term threat to civilised life on this planet". Soon after becoming Speaker he called for the regime's overthrow.

His covert action programme will not provide military aid to the regime's enemies, and is aimed more at foiling Iranian extremism, but the CIA considers most of the regime's opponents to be untrustworthy and not eligible for US funding because they operate from Iraq. The agency has also found it hard to work inside Iran.

The Senate this week approved a Bill that will impose tough sanctions on European and other foreign companies that invest in the Iranian or Libyan oil industries. The House is expected to approve similiar legislation early in the new year, forcing the companies to choose between doing business with Iran and Libya, or doing business with America.

Men awaiting arrival of a relative's body comfort each other at Buga, near Cali

Jet crash survivor tells of hearing daughter's cry

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

A COCKPIT black box, one of two flight data recorders on board that contained the same information about the American Airlines flight that crashed in the Andes, was recovered by search teams yesterday.

It could hold clues about why the Boeing 757 from Miami to the southwestern Colombian city of Cali, with 164 people on board, veered 13 miles off course and crashed on Wednesday night.

Boosted by the discovery of at least four survivors of the crash, searchers returned to the mountain peak at dawn yesterday and found a dog that survived the accident. The brown pup, which rescuers dubbed Milagro (Miracle), was found in an animal carrier believed to have been in the baggage compartment.

Officials in Cali said last night they held out little hope of finding anyone alive, and reduced the list of confirmed survivors saved on Thursday to four passengers, including a man and his six-year-old daughter. Yesterday's effort concentrated on identifying and removing the dead, believed to number 160. Officials said they hope to have the task completed by Christmas Day.

Confusion surrounded the fate of one family of four in particular, the Dussans from New Jersey, who were returning to their native Cali for a Christmas reunion with relatives. Gonzalo Dussan, 36, and his six-year-old daughter, Michelle, were found alive. But there was conflicting information about his wife, Nancy Delgado and their son, Gonzalo Jr, 13, who were initially reported to have survived. Relatives who searched local hospitals found no trace of them.

Strapped to a stretcher and fearing the worst for his wife, Mr Dussan recalled that everything appeared normal in the cabin as the Boeing jet made its final approach to Cali. He said he lost consciousness and only realised what had happened when he felt the cold mountain air in the darkness and pain in his head and shoulder. "When I woke up and saw everything scattered around me, I realised we were in an accident." Hearing the sound of rescue helicopters, he called out his daughter Michelle's name. She cried out, but he was too weak to find her.

When rescue workers reached Mr Dussan, he told them his daughter was alive. "He told me, 'I can hear my daughter, I hear her', but I couldn't hear anything," said Carlos Berón, a civil defence rescuer. "Call her," he told Mr Dussan. He let out a desperate cry. Moments later, they heard a voice calling, "Papa, papa", and rescuers found Michelle trapped in the wreckage.

Swiss cult suicides feared

Geneva: Swiss police inquiring into the sudden disappearance of 16 people linked to the Order of the Solar Temple doomsday cult have discovered notes hinting at another mass suicide.

Officers said yesterday that they fear a sequel to the killings in Switzerland and Canada last year, in which cult members, including children, were shot, drugged and poisoned. The 16, eight from Switzerland and the rest from France, disappeared about a week ago. Searches began when the first cult members were reported missing on Monday.

Alexandre Baeriswyl, a spokesman for Geneva police, said that searches of the homes of the four people missing from the Swiss city had turned up notes expressing a desire to "see another world". *(AP)*

France faces more strikes

Paris: Trade union leaders threatened that the strikes which paralysed France for three weeks could restart in the new year, dampening optimism by the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, after the government-sponsored Paris talks on Thursday involving trade unionists and industry leaders (Adam Sage writes).

Measures announced by M. Juppé — which are designed to pave the way for a reduction in working hours and the creation of 250,000 jobs for young people — were condemned by unions as insufficient.

Jimmy Stewart hurt in fall

New York: Jimmy Stewart, the film star, was released from hospital yesterday after hitting his head in a fall at his Beverly Hills home (James Bone writes). The actor, 87, had been held overnight for observation.

Stewart: injured head

Get-out Claus

Rovaniemi, Finland: A defiant Finnish Santa Claus gave gifts to visiting children from all over the world in defiance of his expulsion by the World Summit of Santas for "delusions of grandeur". *(AFP)*

Tipping terrorism grips New York

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

NEW YORKERS are enduring a spell of tipping terrorism. At Christmas anyone who provides a service, from commissionaires to supermarket delivery boys, expects a hefty pourboire. Things are so bad this year that some Manhattanites face paying thousands of dollars and if they do not, life next year could be miserable.

The going rate for an apartment block doorman this year, per tenant, is as high as $200 (£133). Some buildings contain several hundred flats. An attentive doorman, whose duties include assisting residents with heavy shopping and summoning taxis, can expect a tax-free Christmas bonus bigger than his salary.

You must tip not only one doorman, but also his colleagues on the 24-hour rota. There is also the building superintendent ($200), the car park attendant ($50) and the boy who clears the snow from the pavement ($25), not to mention the postman.

It makes no sense to ignore them. Charles Dubow, a writer who lives on Manhattan's Upper East Side, explained: "People can become careless if they do not receive their Christmas tip. A good tip means your car will not be scratched accidentally." Cynthia Parsons, a literary agency executive, said: "Last year I only gave my doorman $10. The guy's useless. He doesn't even speak English." Miss Parsons paid the price. Throughout the year parcels went missing, guests went unannounced and messages were not taken.

> ❛ People can become careless if they do not get a tip. A good one means your car will not be scratched ❜

Melik Kaylan, a Clifton-educated socialite, has his *New York Times* delivered daily. With Wednesday's paper he received a self-addressed, stamped envelope from his Muslim delivery boy, wishing him "hearty Christmas greetings" and trusting that his service through the year had been satisfactory and might be rewarded. "Outrageous," said Mr Kaylan, "but what can you do?"

For New York's many "high maintenance" women, there are other tips to give. The facialist, manicurist and masseuse must all be slipped a high denomination note. The longer you have been a customer, the more you pay.

In my building the superintendent has been in the front hall every night until after midnight this week, opening the door with extravagant courtesy and a quivering eyebrow.

American tax authorities look on helplessly. The tips go in to the black economy, sometimes depriving the federal purse of high sums. It is estimated that airport luggage porters can make as much as $100,000 a year, most of it from tips. In the more expensive apartment blocks on Park Avenue doorman jobs are so prized that they are passed from father to son.

Some professional couples escape New York in late December, simply to dodge the tipping season.

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Poor shepherds struggle for a living in Bethlehem

From Christopher Walker in Beit Sahur

NEARLY 2,000 years after the New Testament appearance of the angel here to tell of the birth of Jesus in nearby Bethlehem, the shepherds, who as the Gospel according to Luke states were "keeping watch over their flocks by night", are a dying breed whose biblical way of life is destined to disappear soon.

Typical of those who still lead their sheep and goats through the rocky pastures known as Shepherds' Fields is Elias Abu Hashish. His house, with its freezing, dung-covered stone stable nestling underneath, is not unlike the reputed spot a mile or so up the hill where Mary gave birth to Jesus.

Mr Abu Hashish's mother, also called Mary, is aged 86 and a devout Greek Orthodox Christian. She worships in the 5th-century church in the historic Arab village of Beit Sahur (House of the Shepherd) built over a cave, which early Christian pilgrims believed was where the shepherds first heard of the news of the birth.

He has spent most of his 63 years following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, leading his herd through the dun-coloured Judaean hills searching for pastures that are scarce because of the spread of Palestinian housing, drought and encroaching Jewish settlements.

"I remember my grandfather and even my father used to rely on the stars to tell them just about everything," he said as we sat looking up at the sky, unseasonally echoing to the sonic booms of Israeli F16 jets. "The stars would tell if it was going to rain, if there was going to be war and where good food for the animals could be found. Now I have a satellite dish on my roof bringing 30 different stations ... that is how the people of Beit Sahur find out today about the weather."

Mr Abu Hashish's meagre flock of six goats and two sheep, down from its strength of nearly 60, is evidence of the problems facing the present residents of Shepherds' Fields. On the surrounding hillsides, where once hundreds of shepherds worked, there are only scores. "The price of grain, imported from Israel, has doubled recently, which meant that many had to sell all their beasts to the Bethlehem butchers because they could no longer afford to feed them. The only way I can make ends meet is by doubling up as a science teacher at the local school."

When Mr Abu Hashish dies, the 500-year family tradition of shepherding will end. None of his three sons intends to take up what many of the young see as undignified work. Mr Abu Hashish said he did not blame them for abandoning the old ways. He admitted that his own efforts to leave had failed.

"One day, after the [Israeli] occupation in 1967, I sold all my animals." But after three days, he bought them back. "I found they were a part of my life ... a real link with the past that is important because of the birth of Jesus."

Letters, page 17

Cheers for Mrs Arafat

Bethlehem: Ushering in the first Christmas celebrations under Palestinian rule, Soha Arafat, wife of the PLO leader, switched on festive lights in Manger Square to the cheers of thousands of Palestinians yesterday. Mrs Arafat was a Christian but has converted to Islam. *(AP)*

CHRIS HARRIS

Elias Abu Hashish with his flock in Beit Sahur, where tradition says the angel told shepherds of Jesus's birth

'Trigger-happy' troops alarm Bosnia oldtimers

From Stacy Sullivan in Tuzla

A FEW feet away from the newly constructed checkpoint, bewildered-looking Bosnians watched the American contingent of the Nato peace implementation force set up camp at the Tuzla airbase.

The Americans are building up an imposing presence and the extent to which they have taken their security measures has led many Europeans to fear that the soldiers may be a little trigger-happy.

Although the airbase was a United Nations camp manned by Swedish peacekeepers for the past three and-a-half years, the Americans have erected armed checkpoints around the base. At the entrance they constructed a bunker surrounded by razor wire where an armed soldier stands as six military police pace back and forth.

Staring at the new site, which was built far from the airport entrance and impedes traffic on the road running past the base, Meho Alipasic, a demobilised Bosnian soldier, looked confused. "They're safe on our side," he said. "We are not a threat."

"They are really overdoing it," Edin Dajonovic, a teenager, said. "Why do they need all this security?"

European countries who have had a presence in Bosnia for the past three and-a-half years feared that the 20,000 Americans may spark confrontation by over-reacting to events on the ground. While the British and the French have experience in the region and are accustomed to negotiating with the warring parties, the Americans are new to Bosnia and are unfamiliar with the local behaviour.

"The Americans are just so tense at the moment. Now when we have peace, Ifor (the implementation force) is reacting as if we were at war," said a Danish UN officer who is part of the force. "I'm afraid the Americans will overreact."

Yesterday they appeared to be close to doing just that. When the Americans heard distant tank fire from their positions at the base, they prepared their artillery battery to return fire. They refrained long enough to phone the Bosnian army to ask where the fire was coming from. It turned out the Danish tank squadron was conducting live firing exercises.

In Gornji Vakuf, British troops have placed bright orange plastic sheeting on top of their army-green vehicles for identification purposes. The orange flags were put in place as a precaution against any "friendly fire", but several British soldiers said they were particularly concerned about the Americans, pointing out that the British Army lost more men in the Gulf War to the Americans than they did to the Iraqis.

In spite of the apparently excessive security measures, however, residents in Tuzla said they were happy that the Americans had arrived.

Photograph, page 20

Turkey votes for Christmas

From Andrew Finkel in Istanbul

TURKS go to the polls tomorrow to vote in a snap general election that few politicians wanted and which no single party can win. The most likely outcome will be weeks or months of political confusion while Turkey waits for a new coalition to be formed.

The courts have ordered six newspapers to be removed from sale for defying a ban on publishing opinion polls. Turkish law prohibits the disclosure of such sampling at any time during the official campaign. Opposition papers have put the True Path Party of Tansu Ciller, the Prime Minister, in third place. However, Mrs Ciller was yesterday shown on the front page of one of the banned papers revealing that her own party's private poll had it in the lead with 23 per cent of the vote.

All three main parties appear to have the support of about a fifth of the electorate. True Path and the Motherland Party, led by Mesut Yilmaz, are fighting for the same right-of-centre ground. They are both trying to beat Necmettin Erbakan, whose Welfare Party has campaigned on a pro-Islamic platform. He advocates a radical break with Turkey's secular and Western orientation and is opposed to membership of Nato and the United Nations.

Mr Erbakan describes the customs union with Turkey approved by the European Parliament last week as a "poisoned chalice" that his party will discard. He advocates membership of a hypothetical Islamic customs union. Like the Communist resurgence in Russia and Eastern Europe, Mr Erbakan has managed to ride the nationalist resentment among Turkey's urban poor, who suffered a year of austerity in 1994 and inflation of 70 to 80 per cent in the past 12 months.

Unlike its near rivals, the Welfare Party is committed to expanding the State's role in the economy. Many Turkish business leaders are expecting a post-election devaluation regardless of the result.

For the moment, Mrs Ciller and Mr Yilmaz say they will not enter into a coalition with Mr Erbakan. Instead, the two party leaders are conducting vicious campaigns against each another in the hope of attracting a large number of undecided voters. Many will vote tactically for the party they think has the best possibility of beating Welfare.

It will be up to President Demirel to select the party leader to form a new administration within 45 days of the election. By tradition, the President choose the largest party in parliament, but Mr Demirel has let it be known he might choose the leader with the most chance of forming a government. After a week of hurling insults in television debates, many wonder whether Mrs Ciller and Mr Yilmaz could bury their differences after the election.

Yilmaz: vicious debates with Prime Minister

Ciller: claims private polls give her the lead

Elderly arrested in opium club raid

From Jane Howard in Singapore

THREE people in their sixties — including a widow aged 64 — may become the oldest traffickers in Singapore to hang if convicted after police smashed an illegal opium club for the elderly.

The 64-year-old woman headed the club, it was alleged, and two 69-year-old men were said to be her assistants. Police said she acquired raw opium, believed to be smuggled from the "Golden Triangle", the Asian poppy-growing region of Burma, Thailand and Laos.

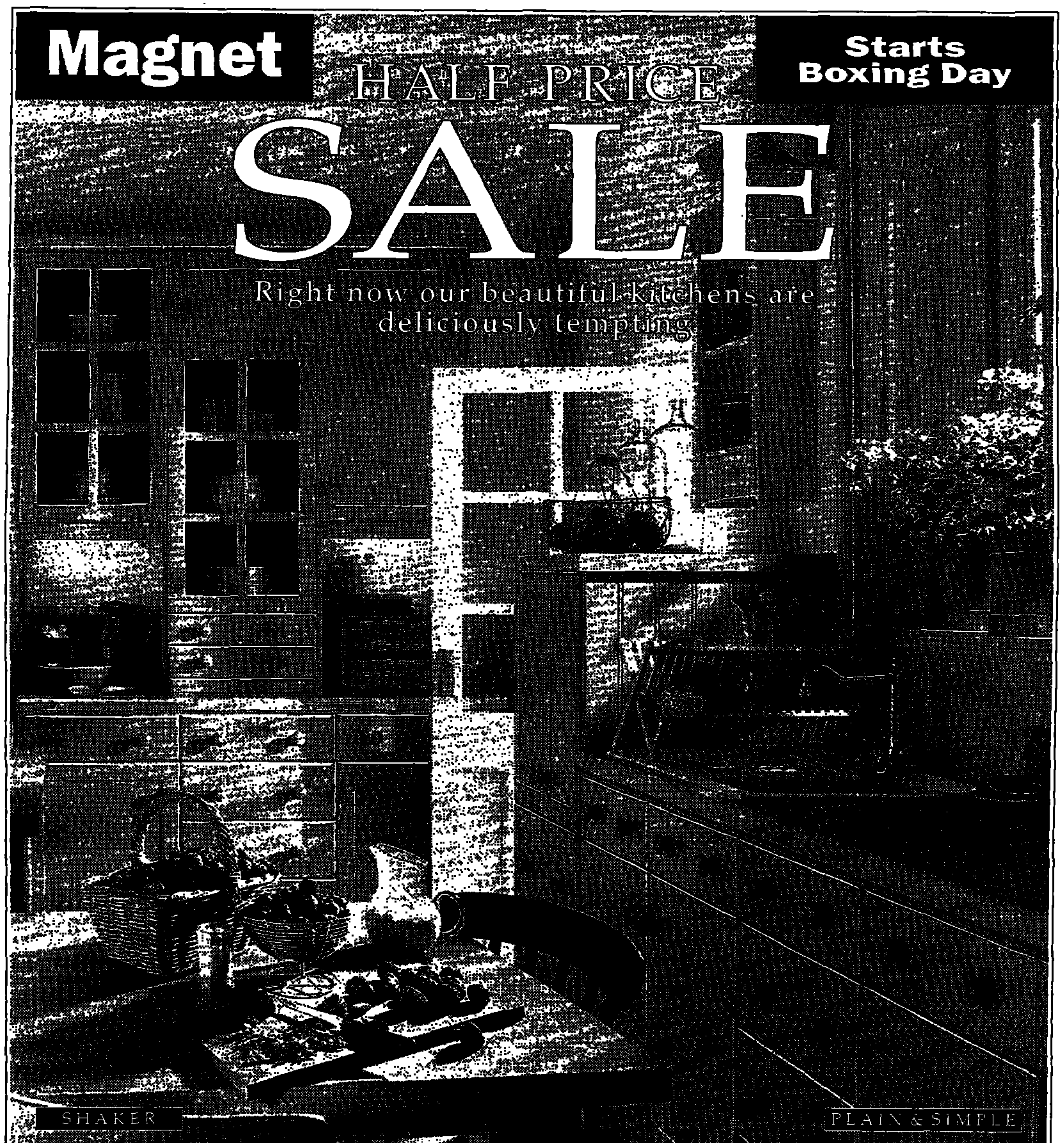
She cooked it in her suburban flat and sold the black, sticky paste to "die-hard" addicts in their fifties and sixties at $10 for a one-gram packet. The buyers smoked it at home in pipes. Police said the woman used ordinary cooking utensils to prepare the raw opium during the early hours. Electric fans helped to dissipate the characteristic pungent sweet aroma.

The Singapore Central Narcotics Bureau arrested the three on Thursday after a raid on their den. Fifty kilograms of opium were confiscated, the largest such haul in Singapore for years. Under Singapore law, anyone found guilty of trafficking in 1.2kg or more of opium faces the death penalty.

The bureau said the syndicate served mainly elderly opium addicts and those who substituted smoked opium for heroin.

Despite the haul's size, police said opium addiction was not a major problem in the city state; 90 per cent of its addicts were heroin addicts and the number of opium addicts was on the decline.

The bureau's deputy director, Masbollah Fazal, said four other suspects aged between 56 and 72 were arrested. Police also seized more than $36,000 (£24,000) in cash, two bank books containing about $60,000 worth of gold jewellery and a Rolex watch.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Di Pietro faces corruption charges as he prepares to enter the political arena

Challenge for Italy's Mr Clean

ROME FILE
by JOHN PHILLIPS

A YEAR after he resigned from the Milan team of investigators exposing the *tangentopoli* corruption scandal, Antonio Di Pietro, the former magistrate who led the crackdown, is fighting a challenge to his integrity that could lead to him standing trial.

Fabio Salamone, a publicity-hungry magistrate in the northern city of Brescia, this week formally asked a judge to indict the 45-year-old former policeman on charges of abuse of office and extortion. Signor Di Pietro's popularity appears to have dipped after the claims against him but the affair is not expected to torpedo his planned political debut.

An opinion poll for *Panorama* magazine last month found that "Tonino," as his friends call him, is the Italians' favourite choice to become Prime Minister, a job that might enable him to continue his campaign to clean up Italy.

As many as 70 per cent of voters said then that they had faith in Signor Di Pietro's capacity as a leader in spite of his judicial woes. Only 40 per cent felt the same about Romano Prodi, the lacklustre but apparently honest industrialist with friends in the Vatican who leads the centre-left coalition. Gianfranco Fini, the resilient and unpredictable "post-Fascist" National Alliance leader, received a 41 per cent approval rating and his ally, Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon, Freedom Alliance founder and former Prime Minister, inspired faith in 34 per cent of Italians.

A separate poll for RAI public radio on Thursday found that 49.6 per cent of Italians did not believe Signor Di Pietro had lost credibility after the move by Signor Salamone, while 44.8 per cent felt he had lost credibility and 5.6 per cent did not know.

Signor Di Pietro is keeping the country guessing as to whose side he will join if he runs for parliament. However, in a draft programme published by *La Repubblica* this month, he hinted strongly at his preferences for partnership with the loose centrist movement he plans to lead.

Signor Di Pietro called for Italy to adopt "French-style semi-presidentialism, as a form of stable government". This proposal has been championed also by Signor Fini.

In a clear reference to Signor Berlusconi's virtual monopoly over private television, he added that parliament should "reduce the concentration of media ownership to ensure effective parity of access to means of mass communication. The absolute incompatibility between political posts and ownership of the media must be recognised."

Fans of Signor Di Pietro, such as Elio Vetri, his chief political aide, are sure that he will survive what they see as a clumsy attempt to frame their hero, who evidently resigned to clear his name.

Signor Di Pietro's popularity appears to have fallen because of the claims, which supporters say are an attempt to discredit him

Chaos strikes with diplomatic chill

THIS month's Anglo-Italian summit in Florence was a triumph of organisation for Our Man on the Tiber, Sir Patrick Fairweather, who is expected to retire next year.

Sir Patrick worked hard to prepare the first such conference in five years. The same, evidently, cannot be said of everyone at the Italian Foreign Ministry. Reporters covering the high-level meeting were surprised when telephones in the press room at the Palazzo Vecchio were cut off for some 45 minutes.

John Major commented publicly on the absence of beating during discussions, and the impression of a country in chaos was heightened by a wave of strikes disrupting transport. Italian diplomats strongly deny suggestions that similar confusion will mar the forthcoming Italian EU presidency.

Show with a losing formula

FAILED politicians are queueing up for exposure on a new chat show to be launched this month by RAI public television, entitled Perdenti *(losers), designed to give a second chance to yesterday's men.*

Newspapers speculate that one of the first guests will be Achille Occhetto, the former leader of the "post-Communist" Democratic Party of the Left, who was ousted as party secretary and replaced by his right-hand man, Massimo D'Alema, after losing a general election to Silvio Berlusconi.

Also considered an ideal guest is Claudio Martelli, the baby-faced former Socialist Justice Minister whose rise to power was torpedoed by corruption charges but who is widely considered able and young enough to make a come back.

"We will do everything with irony," Gianni Minoli and Oreste De Fornari, the programme's presenters, promised. "We like the idea of a show of this kind in a world that appears to only want winners."

The set of the show will resemble a police interrogation room and guests will explain their failures.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Tomorrow, The Sunday Times has Christmas all wrapped up.

(A great quiz, a Rumpole short story and a special issue of The Magazine.)

WHO SAID, *"I'm a silly old fool and I don't deserve this attention."?*

Tomorrow, in a cracker of a paper, The Sunday Times brings you three ways to get yourself into the Christmas spirit.

In Arts and Books you will find Rumpole and the Christmas Squeeze, a short story written for The Sunday Times by John Mortimer.

In a special issue of The Magazine we offer an A-Z of people such as Erika Roe and Michael Fagan who were famous for 15 minutes. We answer the question, 'Where are they now?'

And when you've had enough turkey and television, there's a quiz to see how much you remember of 1995 compiled by Nigel Rees. (Do you know, for example, what beat the Lady of Shallot?)

All in the paper you'd expect to bring you the perfect Christmas.

CHRISTMAS *IS* THE SUNDAY TIMES

هكذا من الاصل

Walesa braced for assault on 'Red spiderweb'

FROM ROGER BOYES IN WARSAW

LECH WALESA, the rough-edged founder of the Solidarity trade union, bowed out of presidential politics yesterday vowing to oppose the return of communism in Poland.

His last day as President was, like most of his five years in power, attended by controversy. The outgoing head of state again threw his weight behind accusations that Jozef Oleksy, the Prime Minister, was a KGB spy.

The row is blighting the inauguration today of Mr Walesa's successor, Aleksander Kwasniewski. The KGB scandal will simmer for weeks, although military prosecutors were reported to have decided that the evidence provided so far was unsatisfactory. Both Mr Oleksy and Mr Kwasniewski were members of the old communist Polish United Workers' Party that ruled Poland under martial law in the 1980s.

At 52, Mr Walesa is looking for a new political role after losing the presidential election. The charges of KGB influence were not his idea, but generated by a zealous group of secret police: they, nevertheless, serve his purpose admirably, for he can establish himself as the leader of an anti-communist opposition, the role he knows best.

As a strike leader in 1980, he helped to bring down Edward Gierek, then the communist party chief, and exposed, in 16 months of brinkmanship, the terminal weakness of the communist system. As a Nobel Peace laureate and standard-bearer of the opposition, he kept the spirit of Solidarity alive throughout the 1980s, even when the organisation had virtually withered away.

Mr Walesa's many critics question whether he can still make a political career out of a crusade against communism, when its structure and ideology have collapsed. During the election campaign, he talked of fighting the "Red spiderweb" which links corrupt businessmen to former communists. But, in truth, there may only be "Red windmills" challenging the jousting talents of Poland's Don Quixote.

The KGB charges against Mr Oleksy, documented since 1983, enable Mr Walesa to play the role of a patriot. There is no more devastating accusation against a Polish politician than that he serves Russia.

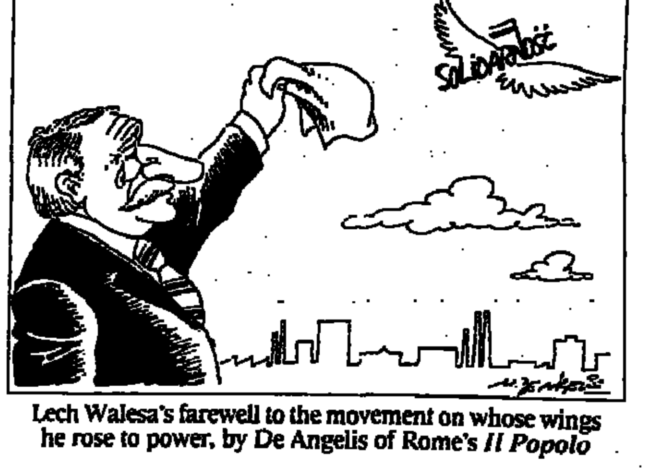
While former communists emerged strongly in last Sunday's Russian parliamentary elections, in Poland, from today, former communists (now calling themselves Social Democrats) will occupy the presidency, run the Government and dominate parliament. It will be an easy matter for a man of Mr Walesa's populist skills to argue that an old alliance has been revived and that Polish national interests are being damaged. There are many in Poland who are prepared to accept this pitch.

Poles were divided under the presidency of Mr Walesa. But the new President will not be able to unify the nation while there is still suspicion that the former communists sympathise with Moscow.

As President, Mr Walesa did not implement a particularly brilliant policy towards Russia but his instincts were usually sound: he gave early support for Lithuanian independence, pushed hard for the total withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland, and was wary of Boris Yeltsin.

But Mr Walesa never quite made the transition from revolutionary to institutional politician. In opposition, with a natural political programme that can unite Solidarity-rooted parties, his career should flourish. But the key question is whether Poland will benefit. The KGB accusations against the Prime Minister, even if they prove false, will give ammunition to those in the West who want to slow down Poland's entry into Nato.

Timothy Garton Ash, page 16



Lech Walesa's farewell to the movement on whose wings he rose to power, by De Angelis of Rome's *Il Popolo*

Car bomb kills officer

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

A MAJOR in a Spanish artillery regiment was killed and his daughter, 18, seriously injured when a bomb exploded under their car in León, northwest Spain, yesterday. Three passers-by were slightly injured.

Police said the attack on the officer, 46, bore the hallmarks of Eta, the Basque separatist organisation. It brings to 15 the number of terrorist victims in Spain this year and is the third such attack in less than two weeks. The blast is the latest in a new nationwide campaign by Eta for the release from jail of Basque separatist guerrillas as a precondition to peace talks. The Basque Nationalist Party favours freeing Eta prisoners, an idea opposed by Madrid.

هكذا من الأصل

■ OPINION

So why did Wenceslas bring the logs? Even the most popular carols have peculiar lines

■ DANCE

Out come the skaters and the little furry friends for Covent Garden's Christmas show

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ THEATRE

Aisles paved with gold: the New Theatre in Cardiff tries its luck with *Dick Whittington*

■ MUSIC

Handel would have loved it: three Hallelujahs, please, for a fine *Messiah* at St John's

Ding dong, enigmatically on high

I never sing carols without being struck by how odd the lyrics are. Come to think of it. I never sing carols at all. Tomorrow I shall have to *play* some on the organ, and then I shall be struck by how odd the harmonies are. But on inspection of where my errant fingers and toes are placed in relation to the notes and pedals, I shall doubtless conclude that the oddity is entirely of my own making. No, carol harmonies are fine. It's the lyrics that are odd.

Well yes, you riposte impatiently, as you pour that first brandy of Christmas and brace yourself for the in-laws. Of course carols are odd. They have to be. Virgin births are not two a penny, even in our exciting "shake a test-tube and pick a name" era of genetic exploration. Angels do not land every day in fields. Trios of wise men do not often cross continents by camel: in fact, only foolish men travel by camel at all.

But I don't mean that the subject-matter of carols is odd. That is a question of religious belief. What's peculiar is their authors' near-fanatical determination to make every line include a great, plonking rhyme, even if it *means using a word that warps* the entire logic of the carol.

Examples? There are dozens. Here is one famous conundrum: the Strange Case of the Unnecessary Logs. You will recall the tale. Wenceslas is peering out of his castle, the way one does, when he sees the peasant. "Yonder peasant, who is he?" he asks, because that's the way they talk in carols. The page replies:

Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain.

Now, explain this. If the peasant lives right by the forest, why do Wenceslas and his smarmy, know-all boy need to hump all those pine logs a whole league to his hut? Why didn't Wenceslas simply say when he got there, "Look, peasant, since it's Christmas and all that, why don't you just hop into my forest and get as much fuel as you need? Just make sure you don't go there at any other time, otherwise I'll set my hounds on you."

Here's another weird one:

Pray whither sailed those ships all three?
. . . O, they sailed into Bethlehem

You have to admit that it is odd. I was in Bethlehem this year. It is on top of a hill, surrounded by land of an indisputably dry disposition. Where do ships sail in? It is hard enough just to get a taxi. Never mind. Consider this bizarre carol instead:

WEEK IN THE ARTS

RICHARD MORRISON

Deck the hall with boughs of holly,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Let us pass over the literary merits of this ditty, which must rank close behind Christina Rossetti's "Snow had fallen, snow on snow . . . er, snow on snow" in the all-time list of Lines That Poets Should Never Have Written. Instead, ask yourself this: is it a good idea to rip off not just leaves and berries, but whole boughs of holly? Good Lord, the nation would destroy its entire stock of evergreens in one mad Christmas.

And why deck the *hall*? Has the author no idea of how narrow the hall of the average semi is? Perhaps he has shares in Elastoplast. No, if you must assemble bits of chopped-off trees, the living room is surely the place — *although personally I prefer* those fairy-lights that wink on and off and play tunes. Very tasteful. I expect that you can get an Arts Council grant for them. But I digress.

The boar's head as I understand
Is the bravest dish in all the land.

What tosh! A quick poll of top restaurateurs would soon establish that a boar's head, while not as gastronomically unacceptable as a mad cow's head, is nevertheless way down the list of culinary delicacies. Delia Smith doesn't even mention it. Let's move on:

The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind.

Gosh — tempest, storm and wind. They don't make weather forecasts like that any more. But isn't there a contradiction here? How does that other meteorological carol go?

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright.

So which is it: calm and bright; or tempest, storm and wind? Come back Michael Fish, all is forgiven.

The trouble with carols is that their authors elaborate too much. They pile up the detail until it strangles credibility. As in:

We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

Now why on earth did the three kings need to wade through *fountains*? Given that Asia is several thousand miles wide, I would have thought that a fountain could have been avoided fairly easily. Oh well, *perhaps that only proves that I will* never be a wise man. But you probably knew that already. Happy Christmas.

Animals limp as skaters waltz

DANCE

Tales/Patineurs
Covent Garden

DEE CONWAY

Christopher Saunders as the Fox and Ann de Vos (Jemima Puddleduck) in the Royal Ballet's children's favourite, *Tales of Beatrix Potter*

The tiny tots came out in force for the Royal Ballet's *Tales of Beatrix Potter*, their high-pitched delight sounding through the dark. But looking at the audience milling out at the end, it seemed the grown-ups loved it too, which I suspect is more than could be said for most critics — or the dancers. Anthropomorphic animals might appear to be irresistibly cute from the auditorium, but dancing inside a heavy carapace can only be hell, even when the choreography is as elementary as here.

Undeniably, Christine Edzard's designs have a lovely evocativeness. The jokes are good, with their play on scale and animal characteristics. Pigs dance on pointe, putting you in mind of their trotters; Squirrel Nutkin is an over-energised delinquent (especially when played by Justin Meissner); and when two bad mice wreak havoc in a doll's house they are finally scared off by a cat's miaow.

But there are many longueurs. Ashton created the piece as a film, keeping the movement simple for the changing camera angles. Transferred (against his wishes) to the stage, the passages of dance sag.

This season you can receive the Potter experience alongside another balletic menagerie for children: Matthew Hart's version of *Peter and the Wolf*, danced by the Royal Ballet School. Or you can watch *Beatrix Potter*, as we did, combined with the revival of Ashton's classic adult piece, *Les Patineurs*, his 1937 vision of a frosty afternoon in a park where skaters disport themselves on a rink.

The ballet's repeated entrances and exits seem to transform the theatre's proscenium arch into a window, the skaters becoming visible to us only when they come within its perimeter, although they also exist beyond. The bassoons and strings of Meyerbeer's operatic music (arranged by Constant Lambert) swing happily and colourfully as the ballet begins. A group of couples appear, confident in their skaters' *chassé* steps, with only one of the men later falling over. Two girls, determined and pretty in their dark blue bonnets, move in inseparable unison until they each perform a brilliant solo, Miyako Yoshida especially dazzling with her smooth pirouettes. They are followed by Stuart Cassidy and Muriel Valtat, dressed in vaporous white, who swirl and float through their romantic pas de deux.

Although the only skating Ashton had ever seen was on *Movietone News*, with a little help he found a way of translating its idiom into ballet and of exploiting the newly strengthened technique of the young Sadler's Wells company. Sixty years on, *Les Patineurs* remains an exhilarating challenge which the present cast grasps.

Tetsuya Kumakawa as the Blue Boy turns and jumps with the flashy *ballon* and clarity that has made him such a hit; but he has yet to come to grips with the celebrated butterfly jumps that imitate a male skater's *manège*, torso pitched forward, legs scissoring behind. Ashton created this role on Harold Turner, Sadler's Wells's first male virtuoso. As night falls and the overhanging lanterns glow, the solitary skater spins and spins; in a typical closing touch of wistful poetry, Ashton suggests he is still dancing after the curtain falls, alone and eternal.

NADINE MEISNER

When small is bountiful

CONCERT

The Sixteen
St John's

One may believe *Messiah* to be a work for all seasons and not just for Christmas, but it slotted very agreeably into a so-called Christmas Festival of ten varied programmes at Smith Square. Indeed Harry Christophers and the Sixteen Chorus and Orchestra that he directs have long since made it a distinctive part of the repertory, mainly by communicating the predominately optimistic tone in Handel's oratorio as well as its directness of character through the small forces engaged.

The chorus may be a couple of voices stronger than its title suggests, but the element of male instead of female altos gives a welcome edge to the middle register in the choruses, of which even the largo of *Behold the Lamb of God* was rhythmically inflected to liven its spirit and the faster numbers joyously buoyant.

A Baroque-style orchestra of comparable size was an ideal counterbalance to the voices, the accompanied recitatives keenly supported, and the ensemble enhancing the marvels of Handel's counterpoint by the clear articulation of its lines. Mellow but brilliant was the Baroque trumpet solo for *The trumpet shall sound*, in which the bass soloist, Simon Birchall, expressed a resolute assurance to complement his almost operatic fervour earlier.

After an eloquent *Comfort ye* at the beginning, his tenor colleague, Ian Partridge, was obliged to withdraw with a throat affliction during part two. His place was unobtrusively and confidently taken by Andrew Carwood from the chorus, who was then heard to vehement purpose in *Thou shalt break them*, and a smoothly phrased duet at *O death*.

Christophers has discarded a counter-tenor from his soloists since I last heard him conduct this, which gave more opportunity to hear a fresh-voiced young contralto in Sally Bruce-Payne, who needs only to infuse more colour into her tone to carry her far. Lynda Russell's soprano sounded unduly glum at knowing her Redeemer liveth, but chirruped brightly at *Rejoice greatly*, which, like the other soloists' arias, was properly and modestly decorated.

NOEL GOODWIN

CHRISTMAS THEATRE: Spotlight turns on the confectionery; and Cinderella misses the ball

Away with chocs

The captain (Andy Jones), Blodwyn the Cook (Wyn Calvin) and the mate (Dave Powys) being silly in *Dick Whittington*

Dick Whittington
New Theatre, Cardiff

OH, NO it can't be. Oh, yes it can. It's another Cadbury's panto. The company is, to its credit, sponsoring popular theatre on a big scale with its nationwide Pantomime Season. One minute I am in Wimbledon with *Aladdin*, the next in Cardiff with *Dick Whittington*, both sustained by Cadbury's riches.

However, I am left with a bitter taste in my mouth. Firstly, is Whittington singing the praises of London the most sensitive choice for the Welsh capital? More irksomely, what the season is producing seems to be largely junk theatre studded with commercial plugs.

In Cardiff I am greeted by the very same jingle as in Wimbledon: "Welcome to the magical world of Cadbury's Pantomime/ Sun and laughter shine, so *hold* on to *your* Cadbury's." Cue the glitterball, just as in SW19. Cue oddly familiar purple (chocolate wrapper colour) spotlights. A puff of smoke in just the corner I was expecting and, hey presto, a leggy blonde sequiny fairy appears. This time it is Britt Ekland who does manage to astound me by being worse than Amanda Redington in *Aladdin*. Another muscle-bound Gladiator rolls in too, although Wolf is at least more animated than Trojan the wooden.

Enough of that. What of Whittington? Wayne Morris's Dick is a decent sort of chap in a jerkin. His sweetheart Alice (Su Porter), is harmless enough in her medieval frock and white stilettos. His cat, hunting King Rat (a shoutily rhyming Robin Askwith in rock star leathers), appears to be a kick boxer in a carpet bag.

Still, there is a jolly chase with spinning doors and sliding beds, and the ship rides the ocean's swell amusingly. Wyn Calvin's Welsh dame Blodwyn, with the outsize buttocks, is entertaining and the comic double-act of the *captain and his mate is very* funny. If only you could make out what the captain and other members of the cast are actually saying.

KATE BASSETT

Cold Cinders

The Starlight Cloak
Polka, Wimbledon

In this version of the Irish *Cinderella*, the kitchen maid, Una, catches her prince just before the interval, having conveniently appeared to him in a vision just as he is about to slip an engagement ring onto her eldest sister's finger. I had had quite enough of the characters by this time and assumed we were going to be released at just over the hour, but no, the jilted sister sweeps down to face us and vows revenge. Part two, taking us to three of the four quarters of Ireland and into the belly of St Brendan's whale, peacefully *basking offshore at Carrick*fergus, is yet to come.

What Vicky Ireland's production offers us stands at several removes from the Irish original. Greg Lyons admits that he added Cuchulainn and the fairies to his dramatisation of Jenny Nimmo's children's book, where the heroine encounters a whale but not St Brendan's. Nimmo likewise tells us she added "a few colourful features" of her own, the cloak of stars being one such. The Irish tale at the start of the chain is called *Fair, Brown and Trembling*, and though possibly too plain for the stage in this form, has not been attractively expanded.

Ever since she was a baby, Una has lived in her godmother's cottage, so that when she is handed back to her father, the King of Connaught, his elder daughters are not pleased to see their coltish sibling. Lo and behold, she ends up sweeping floors until godmother calls by and the girl demands, just as if she was living in the 1990s, an exotic cloak and emerald shoes to go to the ceilidh. *Despite her merely visionary* presence there, she manages to kick a real shoe in the direction of Prince Conor and, oh, various adventures happen after that, some logical, some arbitrary.

Attractive features: summer snow melting from the stage; Tony Casement's honest Cormac, Una's friend, and his splendid, twinkling, star-filled cloak; an elegant horse (Marianne March) tossing her frosted mane. Unattractive (two out of many): the murderous cook, a king required to speak in long words, eg, "Is this the sole causation of your lachrymosity?".

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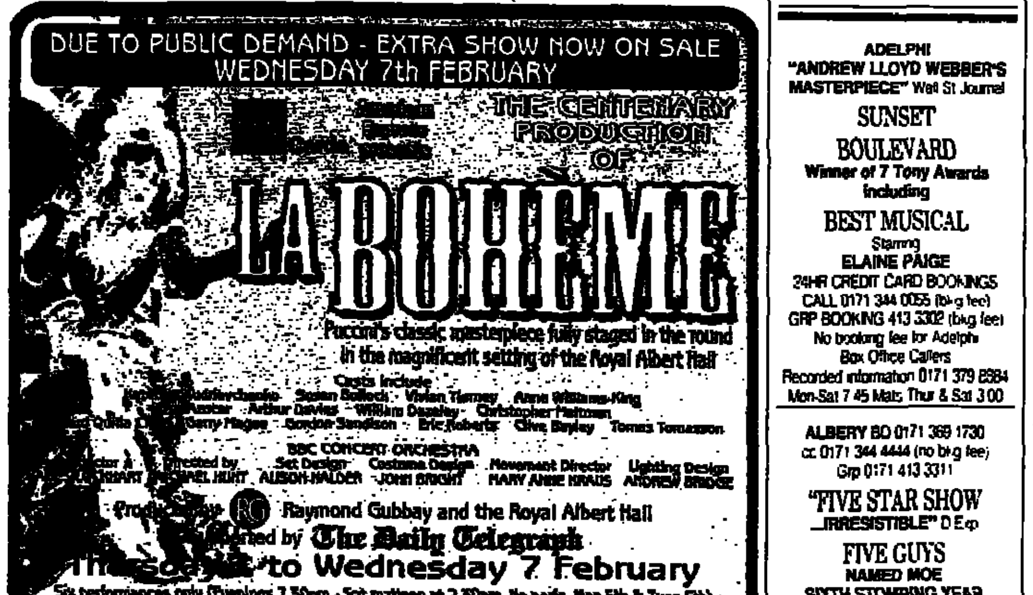
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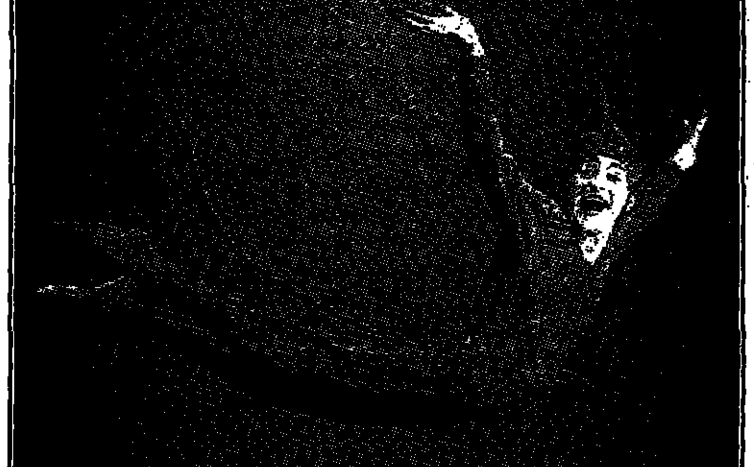

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■ THEATRE

At stake is Richard III's crutch: the RSC and National prepare for a battle of wits

■ BASE NOTES

Mark Elder steps in as Edward Downes refuses to conduct Covent Garden's new *Nabucco*

THE TIMES ARTS

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Down on *Sunset Boulevard* Petula Clark will be the new Norma Desmond for the new year

■ BASE NOTES

Thomas Adès, the whizzkid of the classical music world, will be soloist in his own Piano Concerto

Reputations are made or broken in the annual quiz between teams of our finest thesps. **Matt Wolf** keeps the score

To be or not to be — and other tricky questions

Tired of Christmas cheer? Keen to find out whether your favourite actors really know their theatre? Then head for the annual National Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre Quiz, hosted by the National Theatre, which promises the most nail-biting showbiz tension since Stephen Fry bid a premature *au revoir* to *Cell Mates* and high-tailed it to the Continent.

"It's a Christmas party for the audience, an annual getting-together of fans," says the host, Ned Sherrin, who has chaired the majority of tournaments since they began in 1983.

The contest pits teams of four players from the NT and RSC against each other. A scorer — this year it is Janie Dee from *The Shakespeare Revue* ("We don't know whether she can count or not," Sherrin says) — implements the capricious awarding of points. "They get them according to how I feel at the moment," Sherrin says. "Neither the RSC nor the NT has ever employed me, apart from one number in the *Revue*, so I don't have to take sides."

The prize is Anthony Sher's crutch from his celebrated RSC *Richard III*, which will continue to be passed back and forth until one team wins three years in a row. So far, the RSC has won siz quizzes to the NT's five, but the latter does have on its team associate director Nicholas Wright, who Sherrin says is "quite keen to win".

Expect a mixture of easy and truly esoteric questions, especially once the aural, prop and costume clues kick in. While Sherrin devises most of them himself — "I always spend Christmas working out some silly ones" — each team must provide various audio-visual queries for the other side to tackle. Do you remember hearing a toilet flush during Brendan Behan's *The Hostage*? That was the RSC's sound clue for the NT last year, getting their own back for the year before, when the NT provided the far-off sound of a gunshot at the Act I curtain of *Arcadia*.

The costumes are another matter. "It's usually things like Alan Howard's jockstrap," says Wright, captain of an NT team that this year includes Simon Russell Beale, Benjamin Whitrow and the giggly maid from *A Little Night Music*, Issy van Randwyck. Representing the RSC are team captain John Mortimer, Simon Callow, Caroline Blakiston and Desmond Barrit, whose past as an accountant served him in good stead the one time he was scorer. "It's the only year it was ever correct," he says.

The point of the costume clue is to be as generic as possible — a robe that could come from virtually any Shakespeare play, or someone's skirt from Richard Nelson's *New England*. Last year, in a break with tradition, the RSC offered up David Bradley's huge shoes and loud, checked jacket from *The Tempest*. "The NT didn't get it," an RSC man says. "We were quite surprised, because it looked like a clown suit."

> ❛ Quite a few people come on hoping to say as little as possible ❜

And what of the contestants, most of whom spend the 45 minutes pitched between fear and trembling, awaiting the bottle of champagne that is their payment? "It's a killer," says actress Nichola McAuliffe, a contestant for the RSC in 1992. "I remember making a complete prat of myself, as one does, and afterwards looking at Richard Eyre and going: 'I will never work at the National.' I was right: he was looking at me as if I *had just landed from another* planet and lost my return ticket."

Sherrin says that "quite a lot of people come on hoping to say as little as they possibly can," aware that a cock-up is every bit as remembered as a triumph. Consider, for instance, the year Zoë Wanamaker failed to recognise a question to which the answer was Viola, even though she had played the role in *Twelfth Night* the previous season.

But perhaps nothing can rival the time Brian Cox, playing for the RSC, forgot the event altogether, *leaving Sherrin to complete the* team with an American pulled from the audience (he turned out to be a whizz). As fate would have it, Sherrin says, "Brian was taking some American friends around London. They went over Waterloo Bridge, and he said: 'There is the National Theatre' — pause — 'where I'm supposed to be performing'."

This year's panellists are approaching the occasion with varying degrees of stoicism and anticipation, and Sherrin says there have yet to be any "freaker outers". "I did it because they asked me to; I weakly agreed," says a baleful Mortimer, unsure of whether he can match his performance for the RSC last year. "I had just written about John Osborne so I *knew all the answers; this year, I* shan't know any.

"I suppose I've seem most of the National's productions, or maybe I haven't," he adds. "I hate any form of game or sport: I don't even want to play cards."

Beale, making his third appearance in the quiz, views the contest "with a mixture of exasperation and delight. The audience always knows 400,000 times more than you do. I've given up pretending I'm an expert on anything; I just sit there and look vaguely sort of genial, and hope that works."

Barrit, a veteran of six matches, says the pre-quiz drinks smooth nerves. "The great thing is, you go into the hospitality suite beforehand for a gin and tonic, and by the time you get up there you don't care what happens."

Luckily, he says, the two real experts are absent from this year's proceedings. "Ian Judge [RSC director] is a bit of a know-all, and *then there's Nicholas Hytner, who* also knows everything. If they are against you, you really stand no chance."

But this year's real advantage may be the close proximity of the quiz to Christmas and Boxing Day. Will Barrit be nursing the usual seasonal hangover? "Undoubtedly," the actor says. "But that means I'll be less embarrassed when I can't answer the questions."

● The Theatre Quiz *starts at 6pm on Dec 27 at the Lyttelton Theatre, National Theatre, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-928 2252), £3.50*

DONALD COOPER

Antony Sher and crutch, the floating trophy up for grabs (the crutch that is, not Sher) in the annual quiz between teams from the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre

BASE NOTES

LIFE at the **Royal Opera** doesn't get any easier. Last week the company announced that a new production of *Il corsaro* had been cancelled for financial reasons. This week the news from Covent Garden is even more embarrassing: the veteran conductor **Edward Downes**, one of the world's foremost Verdi authorities, has pulled out of conducting *Nabucco*, because he is "out of sympathy" with the new production, first staged earlier this year by Welsh National Opera. Also withdrawing from the little-loved modernist production, due to open at Covent Garden in April, is the star soprano, **Julia Varady**. The conducting will now be shared by **Vladimir Jurovsky** and **Mark Elder**, while **Nina Rautio** replaces Varady.

● SIXTIES singing star **Petula Clark** is back "downtown". Having filled in as Norma Desmond in **Lloyd Webber's** *Sunset Boulevard* for a month in the autumn, while **Elaine Paige** was away filming, Clark will step into the part indefinitely. She takes over at the Adelphi Theatre on January 9.

● THE **Halle Orchestra**'s fans are in for a heavy dose of new music when the Manchester orchestra moves into Bridgewater Hall next autumn. Three composers have been commissioned to write pieces for the new venue. **George Benjamin** supplies a work for the first concert, on September 11; on the following night the 24-year-old **Thomas Adès** will be the soloist in the premiere of his Piano Concerto. That concert will also contain a new symphony by the top American composer **John Adams**. The Hallé's music director, **Kent Nagano**, conducts both concerts.

● One door closes, another opens: **Alan Ayckbourn**'s *Communicating Doors* will end its five-month run at the Gielgud Theatre on January 6, only to reopen at the Savoy on January 29. However, **Julia McKenzie** does bow out of *the play. She will be replaced* by **Angela Thorne**.

Meanwhile, at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, **Philip Hedley** has announced a bold programme of four new plays for the spring: two of them by first-time playwrights. "While Stratford East has produced an average of one first-time playwright a year on its main stage over the past 40 years the Royal Court has produced a total of two," says Hedley, *bullishly*.

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

ISHBEL MYERSCOUGH

Profession: Painter

Age: 27

Winning streak: Myerscough won the BP Portrait Award 1995 with her oil painting of a monumental black woman reclining on a hirsute goat hide, now touring Japan with *Pictures of the National Portrait Gallery*. Entitled *Krishenda*, her nude boldly unites naive-style perspectives with luxuriant detailing. Her commissioned portraits include Graham Gooch and Antonia Fraser's son. She also won this year's Hopkins and Rootstein Travel Award and is embarking for New York, "for new experiences and the energy".

Inspirations: "I like Bottero, Cranach, Gauguin, the ones who capture the nymphet-look I never manage," she says modestly. She is strong on coldly observed female nudes, blending almost grotesque frankness about the flesh with sensitivity to its strange beauty. She has been compared to Stanley Spencer.

Family: Ishbel Myerscough sounds exotic. The names are Scots and Lancastrian. She grew up in London. The arts are in the blood: her father is a musician, her mother a fine artist who works with fabrics. "Everyone always said, 'You're going to be an artist, aren't you?' " she recalls. "So at 15 I decided to be a mathematician. That was my small rebellion." However she was soon at the Glasgow School of Art, then at the Slade as a postgraduate.

Forthcoming: A solo exhibition of her work is scheduled for mid-1996 at 173 New Bond Street. The coda to the BP Award is a commission to paint a renowned Briton, although she has not hit on a sitter yet.

On the state of art: "I get as much inspiration from looking at an installation as at the work of another figurative painter," she says. "But artists will form cliques, a kind of *self-preservation I find frustrating*."

On her work: "Why portraits? It's staring at what you find intriguing and thinking you can discover a person by staring at them. I get incredibly miserable if I stop painting."

Curious extracurricular activities: "I want a huge collection of classic cars. I don't want to drive though. I also collect wine," she says. "No, I don't drink."

KATE BASSETT

A potted history of freedom

Roger Berthoud meets a potter who relishes the lack of public attention to the ceramic arts

If Ewen Henderson were a straightforward painter or sculptor of equivalent age (61) and international reputation (high), he would be both better known to the gallery-going public and financially better off. But he is cast as a potter because he works in clay, and potters do not get shown in major commercial art galleries — even if their work is much closer to sculpture than to conventional pottery *à la* Bernard Leach and Lucie Rie.

Looking back over his career as he prepared for his big show in Birmingham, Henderson saw a number of advantages in his situation — above all, that he has remained free from the commercial and media pressures that come with success, and free to take real risks with his work. "You have to be a bit of a tightrope walker," he said at his home-cum-studio in London's Camden Town. "You have to put yourself in the state of mind where every time you start something, it's almost as if you had never done it before. It's quite a difficult and dangerous way to work, but I think the rewards can be very large. You're always gambling." With success comes pressure to play safe.

Art, he believes, is largely about such intangibles as "speculation, belief, ecstasy, neurosis. I want the ecstatic end. I love to feel elated and excited and in wonder at things because of their transcendental beauty, and that's what I'm trying to do."

He feels free in another important respect. Although historically and world-wide clay has been used to create works of art for much longer than painting, it is painting that has been most thoroughly explored over the past few centuries in Europe and, latterly, America, while clay has had a long rest. "There is a sense of being right back at the beginning." At the same time, he feels he is working within a great tradition — even if he is taking it right to the edge, and not just metaphorically.

Man of clay: Henderson is "always gambling" in his work

For it is with "edges, points of change, endings" that he is obsessed. As he has said in one of his tightly crafted statements, his work "explores the significance of what is broken, torn or cut, the ability of single or multiple forms to speak of either compression or expansion, flatness or fullness. It is a kind of drawing in three dimensions."

Although he still makes some notably beautiful vessels and dishes, many of his works are purely sculptural, be they tall conical forms, partly inspired by the megalithic sites which he visits every summer, or zig-zag forms of sensual delicacy, or rugged little upright creations that recall now a bird, now a weathered rock, now a torso. It is important, he believes, that works of art should not reveal everything, least of all at first glance, as so many do nowadays.

The generally sombre tones and colours of his pieces derive from commercial stains and oxides that are worked into the clay before firing, never applied. The sometimes wafer-thin yet rugged textures are made possible by the use of paper clay, a mixture of clay and paper pulp. He makes it himself with an industrial waste-disposal unit. "You stuff this shredded paper down, and it shakes and gurgles and makes the most awful smells, and eventually produces this ghastly grey stuff, which I sieve out. It's mixed with all the clays I use. It's something in its infancy, really."

It is not just Henderson's ceramics that are influenced by the Cumbrian, Turkish and other landscapes that — along with classical music, Russian literature and tribal African artefacts — he so passionately admires. He is also a skilled and vivid draughtsman; for the first time a substantial selection of his larger mixed-media landscapes is being shown in this touring exhibition.

His initial training was indeed as a painter, at Goldsmiths' College in south London. It was a late start, at the age of 29, after a strange childhood. His father was a GP in a huge mental hospital near Leek in Staffordshire, where they had a staff house with patients as servants. After National Service in north Germany, where he was "knocked sideways" by hearing Furtwängler conduct the Berlin Philharmonic in Kiel, he took a management job with a Yorkshire chemical company. He ended up for several years in Cardiff where, he says, he "was guilty of making timber unrottable in a series of houses in Newport which should have been allowed to rot very quickly".

He escaped via evening classes in art in Cardiff and, more especially, an eye-opening course at Barry Summer School, under Kenneth Martin, Terry Frost and Harry Thubron. At Goldsmiths', where painting students had access to the ceramics department, he fell in love with clay and the alchemy of change induced by fire — with which he continues delightedly to experiment.

● Ewen Henderson: The Passage of Time *is at the Cotton Gallery, Midland Arts Centre, Birmingham (0121-440 4221), until January 28, then on tour*

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Europe's Eastern recruits

Timothy Garton Ash meets four optimistic revolutionaries

Six years after the velvet revolutions which saw off Communism in Central Europe, and paved the way for the end of Communism in Russia, the post-Communists are back almost everywhere. An unhappy Christmas, then? For Russia, yes, with fairly unreconstructed post-Communists in first place and the wild nationalists of "mad Vlad" in second. But in conducting a series of radio conversations with four leading Central European anti-Communists from 1989, I still found an overwhelming sense of historical gain — and cautious optimism about where their countries are heading.

Each of the four has an extraordinary life-story. Werner Krätschell is a priest who took the remarkable step, when the Berlin Wall was built in 1961, of using false identity papers to get *back* into East Germany from the West, because, as he said, "people will need me there".

In the 1980s, his church in Pankow was a haven for opposition groups. Reading his Stasi file, from which he found that a fellow-priest had been an informer, only reinforced his wonder at being able to live and travel freely in the united Germany that he never thought he would see.

> These men have more faith in Europe than most in the West

Pavel Bratinka was one of those Czech intellectuals forced to do menial work because they refused to collaborate with the Communist regime. He stoked boilers. When I used to visit him in the 1980s, he expounded to me with guttural eloquence his Catholic neo-conservative views. Now his country's Deputy Foreign Minister, he celebrates with passionate conviction the growth in the Czech lands of the "democratic capitalism" which previously he could only read about in his stoker's hut.

Arpad Göncz was sent to jail with a life sentence for his part in the 1956 Hungarian revolution. Now he is President of Hungary, known affectionately as "Uncle Arpi". He sees his country, with its post-communist social democratic Government, still moving slowly but steadily westward into the EU and Nato.

Bronislaw Geremek was a distinguished medieval historian until, in August 1980, the workers at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk asked him to advise them on the strike that gave birth to Solidarity. One of the key counsellors to the Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, and an architect of the round-table talks which paved the way for the end of Communism in the rest of Central Europe, Geremek is still fundamentally optimistic, despite the recent presidential election victory of the post-Communist Aleksander Kwasniewski over Walesa.

"We won," he says simply, comparing the revolution of 1989 to the American rather than the French one. "We won even in the election we have just lost." Because, he explains, the post-Communist President Kwasniewski has clearly accepted the fundamentals for which Solidarity's revolution stood: democracy, the rule of law, a free economy, and a firm commitment to seeking membership of the Europe of the West. For his part, President Göncz describes the last nominally Communist Prime Minister of Hungary, Miklos Nemeth, as one of the heroes of the 1989 transition — Nemeth walked along "a tightrope that was not even there", he says — and has little doubt about the democratic and Western orientation of the Hungarian Socialists, as they are now called. The contrast with Russia is very clear.

These remarkable men are not naïvely triumphalist. They all acknowledge loss as well as gain. Loss of the sense of common purpose, of the solidarity of Solidarity, of the intensity of intellectual life and the moral clarity of the struggle against Communism. These good things — the uses of adversity — have disappeared with the common enemy. But they all say without hestitation that the loss was a price well worth paying. And, says Bratinka, it is not as if there are no dragons left.

They recognise that the return of the post-Communists to power is partly a result of the peaceful, negotiated nature of the 1989 revolution. Accepting the Communists as partners in the transition then gave them the chance to come back in a democratic political struggle now.

But how could so many people vote for the post-Communists? It is very simple, says Göncz. When people had basic security provided by the Communist State, they longed for freedom. Now they have freedom, they long for security.

Nonetheless, all four express concern about the shortness of their people's memories. How quickly Poles, Czechs, Hungarians and East Germans have forgotten what it was like until just six years ago! But in a way this too is a measure of success. People forget because things have changed so much and so fast, and because they cannot imagine the clock being put back. Bratinka suggests, however, that one reason the post-Communists have not yet made such a comeback in the Czech lands is that the Czechs did more to purge former Communists and secret police collaborators from public life.

Perhaps most interesting is the mixture of idealism and scepticism about Europe. These four still talk about the European idea with an enthusiasm that one very rarely encounters anywhere in Western Europe. But they are depressed about what Göncz calls the short-sighted mentality of "grocers" in the policy of the EU, the unreadiness to "open this fortress", as Krätschell puts it, and the concentration on monetary union at the expense of the larger political project, which is what they understood Europe to be. "We will join the EU," says Geremek, "at a time of very deep crisis for the European idea." Both the confidence and the worry seem well-founded.

Radio 4 will broadcast the conversations on The World Tonight *(10pm) on December 26, 29 and January 5.*

Inflated expectations mean Christmas deflations, writes **Magnus Linklater**. So what should we do?

Mince pies and festive black eyes

On Christmas Day 1664, Samuel Pepys went to church alone because his wife was nursing the black eye that she had sustained during a row with him the previous week.

He came back home for a meal, which he spent patching things up with his wife and her family, then went round to see his friend Sir William Batten, the Navy Surveyor, and got on so well that Sir William invited him to bring Mrs Pepys to dine the next evening. Pepys spent the rest of the day wondering how he was going to explain why his wife would be unable to accept the invitation.

Christmas was not a day that the great diarist relished particularly. He does record that his wife made mince pies and that they occasionally dined on roast pullet and plum porridge; but they had another row when he complained about the food. He often ate alone on Christmas Day, or spent it with friends, before returning to his chamber to work on some papers. On the other hand, since he did not attach much significance to the day, beyond listening to at least one and more often two sermons, he never complained particularly.

There is perhaps something to be said for taking Christmas down a peg or two. Spending it unspectacularly, like Pepys, might help to lower expectations and thus avoid disappointments — the main cause of festive unhappiness. As it is we are encouraged, each year, to expect a minor miracle. The absurdly long commercial build-up, the extravagance of the present-giving ritual, the feverish jollity of all those reunions creates an atmosphere of almost impossible tension, with endless opportunities for anti-climax. If only it could be a more *ordinary* day, then, perhaps, there would be fewer emotional disasters, like the one recorded by Harold Nicolson on Christmas Day 1933: "I feel dreadfully sad all day. Lunch with Mummy. Very grim. Tea at Gwen's. Rather strained." Or Chips Channon in 1942: "I am profoundly unhappy and lonely, really. My life is a mess . . ."

It is, of course, all Charles Dickens's fault. By showing off about what Christmas should be like, he created an ideal which none of us will ever match. His essay on the Christmas Tree, with its fantastic decorations, surrounded by children with pink cheeks, happy faces and "diamond-eyes" conjures up a picture which is every ad-man's-dream and every mother's despair. In Dickens's Christmases, there were never tears before night, drumming heels on the floor or wild tantrums because some nightmare electric toy had come without its batteries.

It is usually the presents which cause the trouble. My memories of the more spectacular Christmas failures revolve mainly around disastrous gifts, whether ill-thought-out, absurdly extravagant or simply inadequate. They can, like Christmas itself, strain an already difficult relationship by exposing fault-lines which you had vowed to overlook. However much you may pretend to be pleased by some ludicrously inappropriate present, you cannot help resenting it — and all too often it shows. "So that's what she really thinks of me," is the unspoken thought. The last-minute purchase of a floral-patterned tea cosy, shaped like a fish, which you hoped would be taken in the light-hearted spirit with which it was given, turns into a hideous insult, a none-too-subtle reflection on some loved one's taste and general lifestyle. That amusing office toy which you thought would liven up the desk of your sister's new husband is interpreted by him as a hint that he is an office bore; at that point you realise that he probably is.

The cheap plastic pen set that you bought because you had understood that everyone would be giving only token presents this year looks suddenly not only cheap, but nasty; it contrasts unfavourably with the hand-made silk shirt, specially brought back from Singapore, with your initials stitched on to the front pocket; your least favourite cousin looks insufferably smug as she hands it over.

The "useful" presents are often the worst. "Once," wrote Dylan Thomas, "I had a little / crocheted nose bag from an aunt now, alas, / no longer whinnying with us. And pictureless books / in which small boys, though warned with quotations / not to, would skate on Farmer Giles' pond, / and did and drowned; and books that told me / everything about the wasp, except why."

We buy randomly and badly at Christmas, in a way we never do at other times of the year, because we feel burdened by inflated expectations which fatally cloud our judgment. For the same reason, we gather in family groups determined that everyone, this time, is is going to be imbued with festive spirit. Then, when they are not — or else are over-imbued — we are doubly disappointed, and at least partly responsible. To dashed expectations are added guilt, and guilt is as much a part of Christmas as mistletoe and electronic carols.

Better by far to treat Christmas as just another day. Then, if things go right the unexpected bonus will be all the more appreciated. But perhaps the revolutionary idea would be to think of it, after all, as a religious festival, which seems to have been the original point. John Betjeman explored the proposition in his poem on Christmas:

And is it true? For if it is
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissued fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this simple Truth compare —
That God was man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.

The glory and the shame

One of our finest churches is to be found in Bristol, yet it is insulted by its setting and its neighbours

Simon Jenkins

This year's Christmas game is to name the ten best parish churches in England. I shall pre-empt the winner. First on the list must be Bristol's St Mary Redcliffe, to Elizabeth I the "fairest and goodliest" in her land. Tomorrow afternoon at 4 o'clock, its soaring columns will dance to candlelight and its high vault echo to the sound of carols. For a moment, the bedlam of a modern city will recede and the ghosts of Cabot and Chatterton will walk the aisles.

The City of Bristol makes a sad spectacle for a lover of English churches. A one-time monument to the Goths, it succumbed first to the descendants of the Huns and now to the Vandals. Nowhere have the vandals been more triumphant than in closing most of Bristol's places of worship. The authorities have capitulated without a fight. On door after door is a sign declaring churches closed by vandals. No pagan invasion, no anticlerical uprising, could have scored so blatant a victory.

The Norman church of All Saints Corn Street, encrusted with the memorials of what was England's third city, is shut to the world. Christ Church Broad Street, Bristol's answer to St Martin-in-the-Fields, is likewise closed, the vandalism excuse pinned to its door. St John's, tucked away above a gate in the old city wall, is dirty, bleak and barred. St Nicholas' is inaccessible. Even John Wesley's New Room in the Horsefair, Methodism's most ancient shrine, has been closed whenever I have tried it. Bristol has few great buildings. Its churches once ranked with those of York and Norwich. Yet monuments that would be the glory of any city in Europe are barricaded against citizen and visitor alike.

These churches have not been closed by vandals. They have been closed by Bristolians. All public buildings, indeed all inhabited spaces, are prey to vandalism. The churches are shut because local people cannot be bothered to look after them. Bristol cannot even summon up the unemployed, much-cited by its left-wing council, to act as custodians or janitors. To close a church on grounds of vandalism — not even offering the option of paying for access — is to allow lawlessness to triumph. In this way, Bristol publicises to the world both the power of its criminal class and its lack of community spirit. (In this, to be fair, Bristol is not alone: I found Luton's splendid parish church locked the Sunday before Christmas.)

Yet there are compensations. The cathedral and the Lord Mayor's chapel are both open. And across the river, on what used to be the Red Cliff above the medieval port, stands St Mary's. It sits by a traffic roundabout, insulted by factories and housing estates as banal as any in Bristol. But it has its dignity. Throughout the Middle Ages it rose above a port that was one of the busiest in the world. St Mary's embodied this maritime prowess and had every intention of rivalling the cathedral on the hill. Its spire soared over a forest of masts and a cloud of smoke, beckoning sailors upriver to home. This church marked their final landfall and spiritual haven.

St Mary's was built, or rebuilt in its present form, not from church funds but by the West Country merchant dynasties, the Cabots, the Jays, the Canynges, the Ameryks, the Medes. The adventurers and tycoons of the 14th and 15th centuries saw here a manifestation of glory in this world as well as security in the next. They gave money in return for indulgences. They built chantries to guard their souls in purgatory. They raised altars to their favourite saints. They financed clergy to sing Masses. In 1416, a merchant named Belinus gave precious books in Latin to be read by the vicar and chaplains at their leisure. St Mary's was one of only two churches in England that could afford a stone vault. That vault, with its lofty transepts and 1,200 sacred and profane bosses, is a match for any cathedral.

No part of the building enjoyed more exuberant patronage than the north porch, which looked down over the huddled roofs towards the quays. This wonder of English medieval art would be renowned nationwide were it in a London museum or at the Louvre or the Metropolitan. Here it sits by a traffic whirlpool on Bristol's fringes, unnoticed and rather scruffy.

Choirs of angels: but why does Bristol let its churches close?

St Mary's porch was a church in itself. Here sailors would lay offerings at the shrine of the Virgin, in hope of a safe voyage or in thanks after one. Gifts, gold, icons, pictures and cloths from across the world would stack up against its walls. The Purbeck shafts of the inner sanctum would shine like a Hindu temple from a hundred candles, their "wind-blown" stiffleaf capitals shimmering with movement. The hexagonal outer hall would fill with the noise of merchant chatter. Here bargains would be struck and farewells taken. St Mary's porch was the social as well as religious customs house of Bristol.

Treatises have been written on the style of this curious structure, and especially the embrace of East and West in its doorway. The latest, a book just published by Michael Quinton Smith, sees in its deep-carved surround, its diamonds, lozenges, cusps and crockets, perfect copies of Indian and Chinese ivories, Moorish temples, manuscripts and fabrics. By the early 14th century, English taste was no longer slave to France. It was open to the trade winds. St Mary's porch is Gothic, but Gothic bent, twisted, undercut, tortured. Its lines rise, swerve and plunge through three dimensions. Ogee arches nod and recede. Here, says Quinton Smith, is all the "luxuriance of Seljuk portals in Asia Minor or the stucco-work of Islamic Spain".

Who designed this neglected marvel? We know that its motifs recur in medieval psalters. We know that one "Robert the Sculptor" was in the retinue of an expedition sent to Persia by Edward I that is known to have visited the Masjid Camii at Isfahan. The Persian temple vault is strikingly similar to the Lady Chapel at Wells. St Mary's may be the handiwork of the master mason of English Decorated, William Ramsay, described by the historian John Harvey as "one of the most *significant* architectural innovators of all time". Ramsay was felled by the Black Death in 1349, but not before he had treated English Gothic to the same virtuosity later shown by artists of the baroque. There is an "oriental" door by Ramsay at Cley-next-the-sea in Norfolk, another forgotten memorial to English medieval enterprise.

St Mary's porch is Decorated Gothic refulgent. In the early 14th century, with the country prospering and the Hundred Years' War not begun, English architecture seemed to take a great leap, bursting from the constraints of Europe to taste the delights of a wider world. This flirtation with the Orient — akin to the Georgian dabbling with Chinoiserie — was brutally terminated by the Black Death. When English architects picked themselves up again under Richard II, they were an austere bunch more concerned with engineering. Perpendicular was the order of the day. The killjoys triumphed, as they have done time and again in the history of England's style wars. When the Victorian restorers arrived, many found Decorated Gothic degenerate, unfunctional, even un-Christian.

Above St Mary's porch is a private chamber. Here in 1768 the boy-poet Thomas Chatterton, son of the church sexton, claimed to have discovered a store of medieval poems which he contrived to have published. The poems were revealed as forgeries, being written by Chatterton himself. As a result, he enjoyed a brief fame and travelled to London to seek his fortune, but was rejected and committed suicide at the age of 17. Seldom was a young man's death so memorialised, in a tragic painting in the Tate, in operas, books and, most recently, Peter Ackroyd's *Chatterton*. Keats wrote *Endymion* in his honour and Wordsworth referred to "the marvellous boy, / The sleepless soul that perished in his pride".

Chatterton's tragedy stirred the revival of Gothic that went on to flower under the Victorians. It badly needs reflowering today as the traffic drones past St Mary's and the pollution drips from its ancient stones. What a tale Bristol has to tell, if only Bristolians would let it speak.

THE TIMES DIARY

Inside mole

JOHN MAJOR will forget his political worries this Christmas and put his slippered feet up in front of the television at his Huntingdon home. The Prime Minister is planning to settle in for the animated version of *The Wind in the Willows*, which will be screened on Christmas Day.

At this week's charity premiere of Kenneth Grahame's classic tale of the riverbank, Norma Major said she would be encouraging her beleaguered husband to relax with Toad, Rat, Mole and Badger. Although Badger bears a passing resemblance to Norman Lamont, who has long been Major's *bête noire*, Norma said: "I think it will do very nicely with tea after lunch."

The Prime Minister will sit goggle-eyed with his steaming cuppa watching the story of how the riverbank heroes reclaim Toad's ancestral home from the Weasels. He will be hoping that no parallels will be drawn between Toad's eviction from Toad Hall and his own position at No 10.

His opera-loving wife, however, will be more concerned with another drama, which finishes just as Toad cranks up for his first "poop-poop". *La Bohème* is on the other side.

Prime time: Toad

● *News that will not do much to improve the Home Secretary's mood over Christmas comes from Derek Lewis, the man he sacked as head of the Prison Service. Lewis is writing a book on prisons, highly critical of the Government, with the working title of* No. Minister.

Chaplain-esque

THE BUSIEST of our boys in Bosnia on Christmas Day will be eight regimental padres. The arrival this week of British troops in far-flung peacekeeping positions presents the Allied Command, and more particularly its chaplains, with a gruelling logistical task.

Each chaplain will conduct at least five services before Monday afternoon, catering for all denominations and starting with a midnight service. Then the "flying padres" — sporting flak jackets and army fatigues — will be rushed by armoured escorts to minister at ruined warehouses and factories throughout Bosnia and Croatia. "It's an exercise that requires strict discipline," snaps an army spokesman. Only when duties are complete will the clerics settle down to a turkey dinner: a plane bearing 10,000 of the birds made a special delivery last week.

Where first?

ISRAELI forces may have withdrawn, but tensions simmer still in the little town of Bethlehem. The contention centres on which Christmas Eve service the PLO chairman, Yassir Arafat, should attend on his first symbolic visit.

Traditional rivalry between the Churches of the Holy Land makes the Arab-Israeli conflict look like a parlour game. So the order in which the Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Lutherans hold their Bethlehem nativity services is strictly regulated by a protocol drafted in 1840.

This year, the attendance of the Muslim guest of honour has set the cat among the ecumenical pigeons. Arafat has promised to celebrate at a Christmas service, but no one knows which denomination he will choose.

"He might surprise all of us and come to them all," said the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, Samir Kafiti, with festive optimism.

Band Adie

KATE ADIE isn't letting a broken ankle interfere with her broadcasting. The steely-eyed trooper, who slipped in the Sarajevo snow, is recording the Christmas edition of Radio 4's *With Great Pleasure* from her bed in a Nottingham hospital.

The festive edition of the show, in which celebrities have their favourite pieces of literature read by actors, is usually recorded in front of a studio audience. "We thought we would have to scrap it," says one of the makers, "but Kate insisted on going on. So Juliet Stevenson and Tim Pigott-Smith recorded their pieces and then we went to the hospital, and Kate listened to them and recorded her stuff."

STOP DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE
Pugh

Royal calm

SANDRINGHAM is under siege from journalists. Waves of badwill are crashing around Kensington Palace, where the Princess of Wales is expected to spend Christmas. But in one little corner of the royal battlefield, peace has settled like a Yuletide snowfall.

Just yards from the Princess's apartments in Kensington Palace, another Princess will enjoy a better share of the presents, as well as double rations of cake. For on Christmas Day, Princess Alice celebrates her 94th birthday. She will be joined by her son, the Duke of Gloucester, and his family.

I trust there won't be a wrinkle of rancour concerning Christmases past. Princess Alice has customarily enjoyed the country setting of her family home, Barnwell Manor in Northamptonshire. But this year she has been forced down to Kensington Palace (known as "the aunt heap" on account of the number of royal relations gathered there) because her son has put Barnwell up for sale.

Happy birthday, Princess

P·H·S

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الاصل

GOD WITH US

But Mary kept all these things . . . in her heart (*Luke ii.19*)

The Gospel of Luke so powerfully shaped the Christian imagination that ancient tradition held Luke to be not only a doctor but an artist. Although, in recounting the birth of Jesus, Matthew gives us the story of the Magi following the star and presenting their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, Herod's massacre of the children of Bethlehem, and the flight into Egypt, it is Luke who tells of the Annunciation, the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, the visit of the shepherds and the choirs of angels — the inspiration of the simplest of carols and the greatest of paintings.

Luke's artistry focuses as much on Mary, the Virgin Mother, as on the child of promise that she bears. For the fathers of the Church in the early centuries, that sign of the Virgin Birth is itself not so much a miracle of biology as the powerful symbol of the salvation God brings to a flawed and fallen world by an act of new creation. Mary's obedient acceptance of her vocation gathers up our human response of faith to the call of God. When Luke tells the story of Gabriel greeting Mary with the news that she is to be the mother of the promised Messiah, Mary shrinks from this message in awe and amazement. Artists down the ages have found that moment of annunciation, indeed of incarnation, poignant and powerful. Here God comes near — unimaginably near — to the world that He made.

The thread of awe and wonder runs right through the stories of the birth of Jesus. These are mysteries indeed to be kept and pondered in the heart. The truth of God which we encounter in the birth of this child is not a truth which lies on the surface. As a wise Christian once observed: "It is not the things which we know clearly, but the things which we know unclearly which are the most significant." The claims to truth of moral choice and religious faith are not the less because they cannot be contained within a rigidly empiricist mould. A poem or painting requires contemplative attention if it is to yield its truth: so likewise does the discernment of faith.

Faith finds that the coming of God to His creation is not in a power that rends the heavens but in the hiddenness of a poor child born in an outhouse for animals. The Creator is as one created. The shepherds startled by a vision of angels run to Bethlehem in amazement, and when they come they find no signs of kingship, no radiance of glory, though later artists have portrayed a stable radiant with divine light. All that is there is a mother, and her new-born child in a feeding-trough, which, as John Donne wrote: "He found a Golgotha even in Bethlehem, for to His tenderness the straws were almost as sharp as the thorns after."

That hiddenness of Bethlehem runs on through his life — the anonymous Jesus coming in the crowds to be baptised; the carpenter's son unrecognised in Nazareth; the one who seeks to keep his gift of healing a secret, and who enters Jerusalem not on the warhorse of a conqueror but on a peasant's donkey. And in the end the abandoned anguished figure on the Cross, when darkness descends on sight and spirit; and the strange, mysterious encounter in the garden of the Resurrection, when as the Risen One He is recognised by Mary Magdalene only when He calls her by name. As St Paul wrote in the earliest of Christian hymns, "He emptied himself, He made himself nothing". That love "so amazing, so divine" is the heart of the Christian Gospel which dares to speak of the humility of God. By that God, all human distortions of power are judged. In the end, and at the End, faith will vanish into sight: but here it is the eye of faith which sees, and knows in Jesus, Emmanuel — God with us. The Love that came down to us at Christmas is indeed a love that demands no less than "my soul, my life, my all".

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Twelve days of stargazing ahead

Every Christmas, *The Times* runs a series of festive articles on this page, intended to offer a food for modest thought alongside the roasted bird and piping hot mince pies. This year, we have looked to the stars and the astrologer's almanac: Over our next 12 issues, we shall consider what the next year holds in store for famous and less famous people born under each of the Zodiac's signs. Does anything make an Aries different from a Capricorn? And what fortunes and misfortunes might each expect in the next year?

Man has believed that the stars influence his destiny as long as he has been able to grasp that the heavens are the Other. As early as the third millennium BC, there is evidence of astrology in Mesopotamia. In the classical world, the Roman emperors tried to keep control of this form of divination as a royal prerogative but were unable to prevent its wildfire spread among ordinary people. As Chaucer bears witness, the medieval gentry of England were obsessed by stargazing and the advantage it might give them against capricious Fortuna.

Since Copernicus, of course, astrology has grown detached from astronomy and been officially discredited as mere superstition. But that has not loosened its grip upon the popular imagination. When Patric Walker died in October, he had many millions of readers, all eager to discover what joys and traumas they should be bracing themselves for. The National Lottery — that celebration of risk and arbitrary fortune — has been quickly hijacked by Mystic Meg, an astrologer who weekly predicts the unpredictable. Most people scorn horoscopes in public; in private, they read them with guilty fascination. So fickle seems Lady Luck these days that any defence against her tantrums is welcome. Dreams of an unexpected windfall, a tall dark stranger or a promotion lighten many days — even when the prospect is unfulfilled in the weary march of events.

The astrological year begins with Aries, the Ram, the sign of all who are born between March 21 and April 20. Gathered in this particular celestial club are such unlikely star fellows as Neil Kinnock and Lord Tebbit, Michael Atherton and Marlon Brando and — among the dead — Wordsworth, Houdini and Charlie Chaplin. With Mars as its ruling planet, Aries is naturally the sign of soldiers and sportsmen — men and women of action and dynamic resolve. Their element is Fire. They tend to live in the here and now and fail to think strategically. They act on impulse, and often act well. But astrologers warn them to watch out for rash and impetuous behaviour. As Atherton showed in the second Test against South Africa, he is thrillingly capable of plucking a century from nowhere and saving the day. But he should remember in 1996 that true grit is a characteristic you display, rather than a substance you take out of your pocket.

The nation's most famous Aries is the Prime Minister, born on March 29, 1943. He may not recognise the astrologers' claim that 1995 was a "cosmic holiday" full of fun, pleasure and foreign travel: some cosmic holiday, Mr Major might mutter. But he will surely be intrigued to know that Saturn, the great Cosmic Tester, is moving into his sign in April, and will stay there for the next two years. Saturn, it seems, loves truth. So this cosmic conjunction will be a judgment day for the Prime Minister — or a "reality check", as the astro-lingo has it. All will become clear. Does this refer to the intergovernmental conference? The publication of the Scott report? Or perhaps an early general election? Watch the skies.

WILD GOOSE DAYS

As pantomime, Old Mother Turkey is a turkey

The last memo that Ronald Reagan dictated as President, to his successor George Bush, was: "Don't let the turkeys get you down." His message will ring bells this weekend. There is too much bland eating in a turkey, fresh or frozen, strangled and plucked with difficulty on a Paul Heiney farewell to farms or trolleyed up shiftily at the last minute from the supermarket frozen food counter.

Turkey is a fine food, palatable to the fussiest children, tasting of cotton wool, and cheaper than petfood. The cranberry sauce, chestnut stuffing and chipolatas make it interesting. Old Winston Churchill, when visiting the United States and offered a second helping, opted for breast. His hostess told him puritanically that in the Southern States breast was politely designated white meat. So the bad boy sent her a thank-you bouquet of dogwood flowers with instructions that she should pin it to her white meat.

On the third day, the last ditch for turkey, after extracting the sinews from its thighs, is fricassee in white sauce with onions, Anglo-curry or dogfood. But turkey, first eaten by the Aztecs, is a newcomer to Euro-Christmas. For the winter festival before Columbus sailed the ocean blue, Britons ate mincemeat, beef which is doing less well than pork in the league table this year, venison for the nobs, and goose. Goose as winter solstice delicacy goes back a millennium before turkey. Goose features in the earliest mythology and stories. Goose was the watchdog of Rome. Goose-girls are folkloric Cinderellas. Geese are long-distance athletes in echelon, honking on their way; turkeys are city gobblers with rude wattles.

The annual feast for printers, in the days of linotype and hot metal, was called a wayzgoose. The etymology of that was a goose that had fed on the stubble or *wase*, before the grain prairies were ploughed and reseeded immediately behind the combine harvester. Goose cooked in the Hungarian or Austrian mode with onions, truffles, cloves and possibly wild cherries was a dish for kings and commoners before turkey time.

The goose is a slippery bird to carve. Unlike the turkey, it has a shallow breast, leaving behind not quite enough for curried goose on Boxing Day. The flavour is too strong for fussy children, who should be kept quiet with fish fingers. The restaurateurs would be doing both their customers and the parks a favour by goosenapping voracious Canada geese in the early morning before the tourists arrive. There ought to be more to Christmas than the turkey. And there used to be in the old goose days.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

A place in Europe: like it or not

From Mr Christopher Whiteside

Sir, Robin Cook, through your columns ("Join us over Europe", December 14), appealed to Conservative pro-Europeans to vote with Labour rather than encourage British isolation. But last night in the fisheries debate he did not vote with them. Instead he went with Labour MPs into the voting lobby in a way designed to maximise the impact of those he calls "Europhobes".

It is probably true that, but for Mr Cook's actions, there would be "a cross-party majority in Parliament for a strategy of constructive engagement in Europe". But the Labour whip has been systematically used to prevent that majority from emerging.

With consistent inconsistency Labour votes with supporters of anything from European federalism to pulling out of the EU altogether whenever it sees a chance to embarrass the Government. For Robin Cook to write about how the resulting controversy has hindered the promotion of Britain's interests is, to use a seasonal expression, humbug.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS WHITESIDE,
41 Queens Crescent,
St Albans, Hertfordshire.
December 20.

From Dr Peter J. C. Chapman

Sir, Mr P. E. Robin (letter, December 19) is quite right: Europe will be the main reason why the Conservatives will not win the next election, but for a very different reason from that which he suggests. It will be because thousands of their followers, such as myself, cannot accept the abnegation of sovereignty, the primacy of Parliament and our courts, which they seem happy to abandon.

Yours etc,
PETER CHAPMAN,
The Medical Suite,
Gatwick Penta Hotel,
Gatwick Airport (London),
Horley, Surrey.

From Mr John W. Bankes

Sir, If the avoidance of war between the members is the prime purpose of the European Union, why be concerned about there being two tiers so long as one of them includes the states of Germany and France?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN W. BANKES,
Mynachlog,
Northop, Mold, Clwyd.

From Mr George Thomas

Sir, Pace the excellent Mr Wells of Worcester (letter, December 20), it now seems clear that in 1999 there will be some countries that will not wish to euronate, there will be some countries that will not be able to euronate and there will be a few countries that will insist on euronating, whether the others like it or not.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE THOMAS,
17 Campden Hill Square, W8.
December 20.

From Mr J. Anthony C. Martin

Sir, Professor Setchell (letter, December 19) asks why the new single currency is named after an Australian kangaroo commonly known as the euro. Because it will bound up and down, no doubt.

Yours etc,
J. A. C. MARTIN,
15 Royal Victoria Patriotic Building,
Fitzhugh Grove, SW18.
December 20.

London's homeless

From Mr R. D. Finlay

Sir, Mr Allan Hodgkinson argues (letter, December 14) that £70 million would be better spent providing a roof over the heads of London's homeless than on the Royal Opera House. The Reverend Douglas Bean, a former Vicar of St Pancras (who ought to know), says in an accompanying letter that very many homeless do not use beds available, preferring the streets for reasons which are, to them, valid.

Jesus said: "You have the poor among you always . . ." (Matthew xxvi, 11).

My vote is for the Royal Opera House.

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN FINLAY,
The Old Vicarage,
Norton St Philip, Bath, Avon.

Down in the dumps?

From Mr D. A. Latter

Sir, Today's cartoon by Peter Brookes shows a pile of mistletoe in the dustbin outside Sandringham, with what seems to be just *one* set of footprints leading to it — and none going away.

Who is in the dustbin, under the mistletoe?

Yours etc,
D. A. LATTER,
Gold Hill House,
Lower Bourne, Farnham, Surrey.
December 22.

Weekend money letters, page 26

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

A better world for our children . . .

From the Secretary of the Headmasters' Conference

Sir, Any teacher would be delighted to earn a tribute similar to that made to Philip Lawrence by his former pupil, Alexander Davidson (Education, December 15). There is no doubt that Philip was a great schoolmaster and he is a great loss to the profession.

Mr Davidson's tribute related to a time when Philip was teaching in an independent school, and it went on to suggest that the problems which he and his colleagues faced in maintained schools do not occur in the independent sector. Would that this were true.

Classroom violence may not occur (though there are one or two notorious cases) and general discipline may be easier to maintain, but the problems of society are no respecters of sectors. Independent schools in cities and many in other parts of the country suffer from break-ins and vandalism. Children, and especially those in uniform, are frequently subjected to attacks, muggings and extortion on the way to and from school.

More must be done to secure the safety of pupils, not only within their schools but also when they are travelling. If more dedicated school buses cannot be supplied, then the public-transport buses should employ security men for the short periods when children are making their way home.

After all, it was an incident when pupils were going home which led to the fatal stabbing. The decision of the Secretary of State to establish a working party to find ways of dealing with these problems is welcomed.

Yours faithfully,
V. S. ANTHONY, Secretary,
Headmasters' Conference,
130 Regent Road, Leicester.
December 18.

From Mr Alan Millard

Sir, If Libby Purves's ideals ("Barbarians at the gate", December 12) could be realised — if we thought of schools as "beacons not business" and allowed teachers to deal with our "sullen, spotty, aggressive, emotionally damaged nuts and bolts" from their own understanding and experience rather than imposed expectations — those beacons might begin to glimmer.

The kernel of Margaret Thatcher's original nut was sweet enough. As a minimum requirement, all children, she believed, should be able to "read, write and add up". I cannot think of a parent, teacher or employer who would disagree. And yet, by wielding a sledge-hammer to crack the shell, all we seem to have produced are the shattered remains of a confused and confusing curriculum, which has to be policed by unprecedented armies of inspectors.

Is it too late to simplify things? We could teach the basics as a core curriculum and allow more time and freedom for individual choice. If children were encouraged to develop their own strengths and interests, and if teachers spent most of their time teaching only what enthused them, everyone would gain.

Employers would have no more complaints about the lack of literacy and numeracy, children would blossom by developing their own talents, and the enthusiasms of individual teachers would be used to the best advantage. Is it feasible, or just an impossible dream?

Yours faithfully,
ALAN MILLARD,
8 Medina Court,
Marine Parade West,
Lee-on-the-Solent, Hampshire.
December 13.

. . . especially at Christmas time

From the Head Teacher of Heritage Community School, Clowne

Sir, On December 13, as I was working in my room at about 5.15pm, one of my staff came in and presented me with a problem, one which is still shaking me emotionally.

The teacher brought in a small, pale and depressed young boy of 13, one of our students. The boy's father had thrown him out of the house and in desperation the boy had walked back to school.

The boy can barely read, has severe behavioural problems at times and staff have found him almost impossible to teach. The older brother had also been rejected some time ago and we do not know where he is now.

Clearly we had to act immediately, so the teacher took him out to get some food while I rang social services. The boy later sat mute in my room while I tried to carry on with my work. He wouldn't look at me, showed no emotion and, after some coaxing, agreed to sit and watch the evening school production. I wrote him a Christmas card from the school and gave him some complimentary cinema tickets as a Christmas present: he never smiled once.

At about 9pm — at my suggestion, in order to coincide with the end of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* on TV — a social worker came and took him to an overnight foster placement close by in one of our villages.

I arranged for the Chair of Governors to pick him up this morning and bring him to school while social services found him a better solution. Naturally they inquired as to whether he should be returned home. My advice to them was that I doubted whether he would be safe, so they are talking to the boy as I write. When I met the boy this morning I asked him if he had slept well and how he was feeling. He smiled slightly and offered an "OK".

So there you have it — Christmas for another rejected, confused and (I suspect) unloved child, an all too common Christmas tale.

I speak as someone who has been verbally and physically attacked by parents, and by a 20-year-old intruder. I don't condemn the children, I condemn the adults. Let us stop preaching and start looking at ourselves.

Yours faithfully,
IAN ALFORD,
Head Teacher,
Heritage Community School,
Boughton Lane,
Clowne, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.
December 14.

Laser hazard

From Mr David W. Guest

Sir, Your report on the dazzling laser beam displays at Las Vegas airport causing temporary blindness of pilots of low-flying airliners is in the same issue (December 14) as an advertisement for hand-held laser pointers.

Described as innovative Christmas gifts, these devices are said to project a laser dot up to 300 yards away and one model offers a solid dot for "blind mode", whatever that may mean. They may be "ideal for presentations", as the advertisement claims, but aren't they also ideal for causing temporary blindness in car drivers, cyclists or any other unfortunate target?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID W. GUEST,
Tudor Lodge, High Street,
Repton, Derbyshire.
December 14.

Oh dear

From Mrs Carol Geddes

Sir, Birth announcements heralding the arrival of a "baby boy" or "baby girl" (letters, December 1, 6, 7, 14) are nothing compared to the greeting card industry's insistence on welcoming "new" babies.

If the child is no longer "new", then surely one's time and money would be better spent on finding something suitable for his or her first birthday?

Yours faithfully,
CAROL GEDDES,
47a Bishops Way,
Andover, Hampshire.

Safe to pick and chew

From Mrs E. Jones

Sir, Having bought a packet of tooth picks (now called wood sticks) I noticed the reassuring inscription on the back: "This product has not been tested on animals."

Yours faithfully,
EVELINE JONES,
16 Broome Manor Lane,
Swindon, Wiltshire.
December 15.

Clerical collars

From the Reverend Bernard T. Croft

Sir, The appeal from the diocese of Chichester for spare clerical collars to be sent out to poorly paid priests in Africa (Diary, December 13) contains the (to me) astonishing statement, "Your neck gets thicker as you get older". But is it true?

With this octogenarian, now in the twentieth year of his translation (downwards) to the ranks of the retired clergymen "with permission to officiate", it has been the opposite: a steady deterioration from collar size 16in, as a pale young curate and for 40 years on. The description "scrawny" now fits.

I recall Bishop Leonard Wilson, at Birmingham, once remarking that he had no neck at all: just a head (firmly) set on his shoulders. But it does seem to me that there must be plenty of those old-time hard, round collars about, for they are rarely seen these days on clerical necks.

Which is, I suggest, a pity, for wearing at least this bit of clerical uniform about the streets is an act of witness.

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD T. CROFT,
4 Freeman's Court, Water Lane, York.
December 13.

From the Reverend Canon D. A. Macnaughton

Sir, Dog-collars are given away free with every Wippell's clerical shirt and do not cost £3 each as your diarist reports. I assume, of course, that all sane clergymen have long ceased to wear the old-fashioned linen collar. Plastic collars are cheap, look smart and need only to be wiped with a sponge.

Canon Will Pratt is also wrong in supposing that canons' necks grow thicker as they grow older. I no longer need a 17in but manage perfectly well with a 16½in collar.

What is surprising is that ministers in Kenya feel the need for dog-collars at all.

Yours sincerely,
DONALD A. MACNAUGHTON,
Hyndford House, 18 Fidra Road,
North Berwick, East Lothian.
December 13.

Wondering about Bethlehem Star

From Dr Andrew Bamji

Sir, It is no wonder that astronomers have difficulty establishing the identity of the Star of Bethlehem if they choose to misinterpret St Matthew ("Following the clues to the Star of Bethlehem", December 18).

The Magi were wise men from the East. When they first saw the star in the east, it was they who were in the east, not the star. If they were in the east, and the star led them to Bethlehem, then the star must have been in the west.

Yours faithfully (in every sense),
ANDREW BAMJI,
58 Goddington Lane,
Orpington, Kent.
December 18.

From Mr Brian G. D. Salt

Sir, After their audience with King Herod in Jerusalem the wise men departed for Bethlehem, "and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was".

Now Bethlehem is about five miles south of Jerusalem. The Gospel clearly suggests that the star moved southwards, which suggests that whatever it was it was a terrestrial rather than a celestial phenomenon, perhaps something like ball lightning. But accounts of the rare phenomenon of ball lightning suggest that this never lasts more than a few minutes, and certainly could not be mistaken for the star that led the wise men to Jerusalem.

The best explanation seems to me that St Matthew's account, written some 80 years after the birth of Christ, is a religious myth.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN G. D. SALT,
Sunny Nook, Maine Avenue,
Port Erin, Isle of Man.

From the Reverend C. J. E. Lefroy

Sir, May I propound a solution to the "Star" question: it led the Magi from Jerusalem to Bethlehem (about five miles) and stood over the particular house where Jesus lived. To do this, by the principles of parallax, it cannot have been more than, say, 100 feet above ground level. Therefore it cannot have been planet, comet or meteor.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. Revelation i, 20 says: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." The UFO was an angel; they are well adapted for leading and hovering.

Yours sincerely,
C. J. E. LEFROY,
12 Rodmill Drive,
Eastbourne, East Sussex.

From Mr Sidney P. Swann

Sir, Christmas being a spiritual occasion, it seems reasonable to look for a spiritual answer to the star question.

The most likely explanation would be the reappearance of the "Shekinah glory" that had led the Israelites out of Egypt into the promised land (Exodus xiv) and was last seen departing from the temple (Ezekiel x, 18) prior to the Israelite nation going into exile in Babylon.

This makes even more sense when you realise the ancient words for light and star were interchangeable — hence a great light seen in the east and a light that pinpointed the stable. The "Shekinah glory" was only visible at certain times and only to those for whom it had a meaning.

Yours sincerely,
SIDNEY P. SWANN,
72 Angell Road, SW9.

Dishes for the gods

From Mr Sidney Sugerman

Sir, The caption to the Hadrianic portrait which you reproduced recently ("Dishes for the gods of long ago", Books, December 14) asks: ". . . if she was Jewish, why was she in Egypt, and why is she shown without jewellery?".

The expulsion of Jews from Alexandria in 415 followed seven centuries of continuous history of Egyptian Jewish communities, while the Gospel according to Matthew records (ii, 13-15) that another Jewish woman, Mary the mother of Jesus, "departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod". She too is rarely, if ever, depicted bejewelled.

Yours sanctimoniously,
SIDNEY SUGERMAN,
8 Airthrey Court,
5 Wilderton Road, Poole, Dorset.

One by one

From Dr Patrick Warren

Sir, Congratulations to Canon Brian Andrews (News in Brief, December 18) for having the courage to say, at a family service, that Father Christmas and the tooth fairy do not exist. It may have upset the young children, but so what?

Much better that they should be told the story of Mr Noah and how he built an ark into which he took two of every living creature (except, I presume, aquatic species) — two elephants, two hippos, two kiwis, two amoebae, etc. Interesting theological point — surely one amoeba would have been sufficient?

Yours sincerely,
P. D. WARREN,
20 Scotts Close,
Holcombe, Bath, Avon.
December 18.

COURT CIRCULAR

CLARENCE HOUSE
December 22: The Lady Angela Oswald has succeeded the Hon Mrs Rhodes as Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

Appointments in the Forces

Royal Air Force
Air Marshal Sir John Allison to be promoted Air Chief Marshal and to be Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Logistics Command/Air Member for Logistics from March 8 in succession to Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Alcock.

Air Vice-Marshal G A Robertson to be promoted Air Marshal and to be Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander-in-Chief Strike Command from March 18 in succession to Air Marshal Sir John Allison.

Air Vice-Marshal P T Squire to be promoted Air Marshal and to be Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Programmes and Personnel) from February 9, 1996, in succession to Lieutenant-General the Hon Sir Thomas Boyd-Carpenter.

Lord Winston

The life barony conferred upon Professor Robert Maurice Lipson Winston has been gazetted by the name style and title of Baron Winston, of Hammersmith in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Election

Mr Anthony Evans, Headmaster of Portsmouth Grammar School, has been elected Chairman of the Headmasters' Conference for 1996.

Major Peter Lendrum has not sent Christmas Cards this year but has made a donation to the Arthritis council in memory of his mother.

Memorial service

Mr Noel Andrew Stephen Jones
The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs was represented by Sir Roger Hervey at a service of thanksgiving for the life of Mr Noel Andrew Stephen Jones, diplomat, held yesterday at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street. Father Joseph Dooley, SJ, officiated.

Mr Mark Jones, son, and Mrs Alison Vincenti, daughter, read the lessons. Mr Brian Smith paid tribute.

Sir John Coles, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Head of the Diplomatic Service, attended.

University news

Reading
Professor Sir Colin Spedding has ben awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science for his services to agriculture internationally and within the university. He was Head of the Department of Agriculture at Reading (1975-78), Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Food (1983-86), Director of the Centre for Agricultural Strategy (1981-90) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (1986-90).

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters has been conferred on Dr Arnold Bentley in recognition of his services to music education. Arnold Bentley developed a pioneering course at Reading for graduate secondary school music teachers. His research interests centred on the nature and development of musical abilities in children, for which he obtained his doctorate and an international reputation. Much of what he established at Reading is now focused within the International Centre for Music Education based at Bulmershe Court.

Westminster
The university has awarded honorary doctorates to the following:

Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa): Mrs Justice Hogg, Mr John MacGregor, MP, Mr Peter Boizot, the Earl of Stockton, Lord Dahrendorf.

Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa): Professor Kenneth Calman.

Christmas birthdays

The Emperor of Japan celebrates his 62nd birthday today.

Princess Alice Duchess of Gloucester celebrates her 94th birthday on Christmas Day.

Princess Alexandra celebrates her 59th birthday on Christmas Day.

Today
Mr Michele Alboreto, racing driver, 39; the Earl of Balfour, 70; Lord Bancroft, 73; Sir Franklin Berman, civil servant, 56; Mrs C. Bicknell, former chairman, Victoria Health Authority, 76; Sir Norman Biggs, banker, 88; Lord Blake, 79; Vice-Admiral Sir Stephen Carlill, 93; Mr David Davis, MP, 47; Mr Peter Davis, chief executive, Prudential Corporation, 54; Mr Maurice Denham, actor, 86; Sir Colin Fielding, civil servant, 69; Mr J.R.S. Guinness, chairman, British Nuclear Fuels, 60; Mr Yousuf Karsh, photographer, 87; Professor Peter Lachmann, former president, Royal College of Pathologists, 64; Miss Belinda Lang, actress, 42; Mr Christopher Lawrence, silversmith, 59; Sir Roger Neville, former chief executive, Sun Alliance Insurance Group, 64; Miss J.M. Quennell, former MP, 72; Mr Ashley Raeburn, former chairman, Boosey and Hawkes, 77; Herr Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor, Federal Republic of Germany, 77; the Rev Christopher Turner, former Headmaster, Stowe School, 66; Mr R.S. Unwin, publisher, 70; the Marquess of Winchester, 54.

Graham Kelly, chief executive, Football Association, is 50 today, Suzy Menkes, fashion journalist, is 52 on Christmas Eve, and Annie Lennox, singer, is 41 on Christmas Day

Christmas Eve
Mr J.K. Ashcroft, former chairman, Coloroll Group, 47; Mr A.T. Baillie, diplomat, 63; Mrs Mair Barnes, former managing director, Woolworths, 51; Professor Anthony Clare, psychiatrist, 53; Sir Colin Cowdrey, cricketer, 63; Sir Gerald Elliot, former chairman, Christian Salvesen, 72; Mr Jeremy Hindley, racehorse trainer, 52; Dame Joan Kelleher, former director, WRAC, 80; Sir Ivan Lawrence, QC, MP, 59; Dr John Marek, MP, 55; Miss Thea Porter, fashion designer, 68; Mr John Taylor, MP, 58; Miss Carol Vorderman, broadcaster, 35; Mr Philip Ziegler, author, 66.

Christmas Day
Lord Annan, 79; Mr James Bolger, racehorse trainer, 54; Miss S.J. Browne, former Principal, Newnham College, Cambridge, 71; Dr Kenneth Calman, Chief Medical Officer, HM Government, 54; Mr F.N. David, commandant, Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh, 52; Professor Christopher Frayling, cultural historian, 49; Lord Grade, 89; the Right Rev Noël Jones, Bishop of Sodor and Man, 63; Sir Nick Larmour, diplomat, 79; Professor Philip Love, Vice-Chancellor, Liverpool University, 56; Sir Peter Matthews, former Chief Constable, Surrey, 78; Mr Ismail Merchant, film producer, 59; Professor Phyllida Parsloe, professor of social work, 65; Lord Sheppard of Didgemere, 63; Mr Nigel Starmer-Smith, sports commentator, 51; Sir Noel Stockdale, life president, Asda Group, 75; the Right Rev B.N.Y. Vaughan, former Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, 78; Sir Christopher Wates, chief executive, Wates Building Group, 56.

Anniversaries

Today
BIRTHS: Sir Richard Arkwright, inventor, Preston, 1732; Sir Martin Archer Shee, painter, Dublin, 1770; Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), Sharon, Vermont, 1805; Samuel Smiles, author of *Self Help*, Haddington, Lothian, 1812; J. Arthur Rank, 1st Baron Rank, industrialist and film magnate, Hull, 1888.

DEATHS: Thomas Robert Malthus, economist, Bath, 1834; Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, builder of the tower bearing his name, Paris, 1923; Anthony Herman Fokker, aircraft pioneer, New York, 1939; Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1st Earl of Halifax, statesman, Viceroy of India 1926-31, Garrowby, Yorkshire, 1959.

HMS Bounty, commanded by William Bligh, set sail for the South Seas, 1787.

Joseph Hansom patented a type of cab, 1834.

The BBC began daily radio broadcasts, 1922.

Christmas Eve
BIRTHS: King John, reigned 1199-1216, Oxford, 1167; St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, Loyola, Province of Guipúzcoa, 1491; James Joule, physicist, Salford, Lancashire, 1818; Matthew Arnold, poet and critic, Laleham, Middlesex, 1822; George I, King of Greece 1863-1913, Copenhagen, 1845; Howard Hughes, manufacturer, aviator and film producer, Houston, 1905.

DEATHS: Vasco da Gama, navigator, Cochin, India, 1524; William Makepeace Thackeray, novelist, London, 1863; Alban Berg, composer, Vienna, 1935; Louis Aragon, writer, Paris, 1982.

Verdi's opera *Aïda* was performed for the first time in Cairo, 1871.

The London Coliseum opened, 1904.

Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan as the Kabul Government fell, 1979.

Christmas Day
BIRTHS: Orlando Gibbons, musician, Cambridge, 1583; Sir Isaac Newton, physicist, Woolsthorpe, Lincolnshire, 1642; Dorothy Wordsworth, writer, Cockermouth, Cumberland, 1771; Alexander Scriabin, composer, Moscow, 1872; Mohammed Ali Jinnah, 1st Governor-General of Pakistan 1947-48, Karachi, 1876; Maurice Utrillo, painter, Paris, 1883; Conrad Hilton, hotel magnate, San Antonio, New Mexico, 1887; Humphrey Bogart, actor, New York City, 1899; Mohamed Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt 1970-81, Tala, 1918.

DEATHS: W.C. Fields, actor, Pasadena, 1946; Charles Pathé, film producer, 1957; Sir Charles (Charlie) Chaplin, film star, Switzerland, 1977; Joan Miró, abstract painter, Majorca, 1983.

The first eisteddfod took place, Cardigan Castle, 1176.

The Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, 1620.

The first Christmas tree in Britain was erected at Queen's Lodge, Windsor, by the German-born Queen Charlotte, wife of King George III, 1800.

Nicolae Ceausescu, Romanian dictator, was executed, 1989.

Appointments in the Church

The Rev Jeremy Collingwood, Vicar, Christ Church, Guildford: to be *also* Rural Dean of Guildford (Guildford).

The Rev Robert Cotton, Priest-in-charge, St Paul, East Molesey: to be Rector, Holy Trinity w St Mary, Guildford (Guildford).

The Rev Bruce Dansie, Curate, Ivybridge: to be Priest-in-charge, Charleton w Buckland-tout-Saints, East Portlemouth, Southpool and Chivelstone (Exeter).

The Rev Raymond Dick, Rector, Hetton-le-Hole: to be Vicar, St Peter, Harton, South Shields (Durham).

The Rev David Duke: to be Assistant Curate (NSM), St Nicholas, Hedworth, Boldon Colliery (Durham).

The Rev Malcolm Foy, Assistant Priest, St Paul's, Ireland Wood, and a Diocesan Religious Education Adviser (Ripon): to be full-time Diocesan Director of Education (Bradford).

The Rev Alan Gledhill, Vicar, Easby w Brompton on Swale and Bolton on Swale to be a Non-Stipendiary Minister and teacher of religious education and geography at St Francis Xavier School, Richmond (Ripon).

The Rev Giles Godber, Team Rector, Watling Valley Team Ministry (LEP): to be whole-time Anglican Chaplain for Heathwood and Wexham Park NHS Trust (Oxford).

The Rev Michael Golightly, Chaplain of Winterton Hospital, South West Durham Mental NHS Trust: to be whole-time Church of England Chaplain for Community Health Care in the North Durham NHS Trust (Durham).

The Rev Catherine Green, Curate, Willesborough (Canterbury): to be part-time Assistant Chaplain at HM Prison, Wayland, and Senior Assistant Priest, Dereham w Scarning (Norwich).

The Rev Nick Horton, Vicar, Middleton St Mary, Leeds: to be *also* Rural Dean of Armley (Ripon).

The Rev John Illingworth, Rector, Weston Longville w Morton-on-the-Hill and Great and Little Witchingham and Priest-in-charge, Alderford, Attlebridge and Swannington, and Acting Rural Dean of Sparham: to be Rural Dean of Sparham (Norwich).

Forthcoming marriages

Mr A.T. Bye
and Miss J.M.V. Collier
The engagement is announced between Alan, son of Mr and Mrs Maurice Bye, of Hanham, Bristol, and Jill, daughter of Mrs Marise Collier, of Sneyd Park, Bristol, and daughter of Mr Geoff Collier and step-daughter of Mrs Paula Collier, of Poole, Dorset.

Mr C.D. Cahill
and Miss C.M. Littlewood
The engagement is announced between Conor Dominique, elder son of Mr and Mrs Gerald Cahill, of Blackrock, County Dublin, Republic of Ireland, and Clare Margaret, daughter of the Rev and Mrs Robin Littlewood, of Malmesbury, Wiltshire.

Mr S.N. Chillrud
and Miss M.L. Charles
The engagement is announced between Steven Norris, youngest son of the late Dr J.G. Chillrud, of Grant's Pass, Oregon, and of Mrs D. Neff, of Schenectady, NY, and Margaret Lucy, elder daughter of Judge Charles, QC, and Mrs Charles, of London.

Mr A. Dawood
and Miss S.A. Levy
The engagement is announced between Ayhan, son of Mr and Mrs Zakaria Dawood, of Bushton, Wiltshire, and Simone Anne, daughter of Professor Raymond Levy and of Dr Katherine Logie, of London.

Professor K. Siddle
and Dr. A.E. Willis
The engagement is announced between Kenneth, elder son of Mr F. Siddle and the late Mrs V. Siddle, of Morecambe, Lancashire, and Anne Elizabeth, elder daughter of Mr E.G. Willis and the late Mrs W.E. Willis, of Finchley, London.

Mr D.J. Zuill
and Miss G.L. Robertson
The engagement is announced between Donald, son of Mr and Mrs Morison Zuill, of Falkirk, late Mr Jim Robertson and of Mrs Frances Robertson, of Toronto, Canada.

Marriages

Mr M. Patey
and Miss E. Simon
The marriage took place on December 16, 1995, at the Church of St Anne and St Agnes, City of London, of Michael, son of Mr and Mrs Christopher Patey, of Wandsworth, to Emma, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Ivor Simon, of Guisborough.

Mr K.A. Penman
and Miss B.E. James
The marriage took place on December 19, 1995, in Fiji, between Keith Alasdair, younger son of Dr and Mrs W.A. Penman, of Summerlands, Dumfries, to Bridget Elizabeth, only daughter of Mr and Mrs R. James, of The Knowe, Dalbeattie.

Latest wills

Air Chief Marshal Sir Harry **Broadhurst**, of Birdham, West Sussex, Commander Allied Air Forces Central Europe 1959-61, left estate valued at £177,650 net.

Mr Thomas Bennion **Boden**, of Denstone, Staffordshire, farmer and deputy president of the National Farmers Union 1980-82, left estate valued at £274,381 net.
He left £1,000 to Denstone Parish Church, for such purposes as his wife decides, and £500 to Denstone Sports Trust.

Mr John Kilian Houston **Brunner**, of South Petherton, Somerset, the science fiction writer who wrote more than 80 novels, left estate valued at £251,472 net.

Other estates include (net before tax)

Mrs Kathleen **Bradshaw**, of Sandbach, Cheshire	£634,548
Captain James Hamilton **Crawford**, DSC, retd, of Lymington, Hampshire	£616,517
Mrs Eva Mary **French**, of Frenchay, Avon	£895,940
Olga Desiree **Gibson**, of Sutton Veny, Wiltshire	£1,090,621
Mr Thomas **Gornall**, of Grange over Sands, Cumbria	£538,325
Mrs Hilda Elizabeth **Hughes**, of Lymington, Hampshire	£611,372

Church services for Christmas Day and Boxing Day

BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 11 S Euch, Jackson in G. O little one sweet (Bach).

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Choral Euch. Hodie (Britten), Blair in G. A Child is Born (Tucapsky). Rt Rev M Santer; 4 EP. (26) 9 MP: 9.15 MP; 4 EP.

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 Choral M. A. Here is the little door (Howells): 10.30 Euch. St Nicholas Mass (Haydn); The Bishop.

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL, College Green: 10 Euch. The Bishop of Bristol: 3.30 EP.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC: 10 M. A tender shoot (Goldschmidt), Responses (Clucas). Britten in C, Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck); 11 S Euch, Messe de Minuit (Charpentier). There is no rose (Joubert). The Archbishop: 3.15 E. Responses (Clucas). Darke in F. (26) 8, 10.15 HC: 3.15 E.

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 10.30 S Euch. Coronation Mass (Mozart). The Bishop of Penrith: 4 E.

CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8, 12.10 HC; 9.30 Euch, Canon D Knight; 11, I saw three ships (arr Ledger). Te Deum in C (Stanford). Sir Christlemas (Mathias). The Provost; 5.15 EP. (26) 8.15 HC: 8.45 MP: 5.15 EP.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC: 10 M. Te deum and Jubilate (Stanford in B flat). A. From east to west (Stanley Andrews). The Dean: 11.30 Choral Euch. On this day (Campbell Stewart), Darke in F. In the bleak midwinter (Darke). Lullay, Lord Jesus (arr Thalben Ball). The Bishop: 4.15 Choral E. Responses (Rose). O Little Town of Bethlehem (Walford Davies). I sing of a maiden (Hobson). (26) 7.45 HC: 12.30 HC.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M. Britten in C. Welcome Yule (Parry). Responses (Reading). The Dean: 11 S Euch. Missa Brevis in D (Mozart). Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). The Bishop. 5.30 E. (26) 9.30 M: 10 HC: 5.30 E.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Oxford: 8 HC: 10 M. Coll Reg (Howells). The Dean: 11.15 S Euch. Missa Brevis (Mozart). Ave Verum (Mozart). The Bishop of Oxford: 6 E. (Latin Chapel). (26) 6 E. (Latin Chapel).

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 MP; 8 C: 10.30 Euch. Hodie Christus natus est (Poulenc). Ding dong merrily (arr Willcocks). Alla Cappella Mass (Haydn). Sussex Carol (Ledger). Rt Rev S Barrington; 3.30 EP. (26) 9 MP: 12 C; 12.40 Midday Prayer: 1.05 Ecumenical Lunchtime Service: 5 EP.

DERBY CATHEDRAL: 10.45 S Euch. Darke in F. The Bishop.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 7.15, 8 HC. 10 M. The Dean; 11.15 Sung HC. The Bishop: 3.30 E.

ELY CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC; 10.30 S *Euch*: 3.45 E with Carols.

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC: 9.45 Sung Euch, Spatzenmesse (Mozart). Carols. The Dean: 11.15 M. Te deum in G (Vaughan Williams). A maiden most gentle (Carter). The Bishop: 4 Nine lessons and carols.

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8, 12 HC; 10.30 Choral M. Stanford in B flat. Responses (Rose). On this day earth shall ring (Stewart). The Provost. (26) 7.40 MP. 8, 13.05 HC; 5.30 EP.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 10.30 S Euch. Missa Sancti Nicholai (Haydn), Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). In the bleak midwinter (Darke). The Dean. (26) 3.30 Cathedral Carol Service.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC. 9.30 S Euch. Messe solennelle (Langlais). O little town of Bethlehem (Davies). The Dean; 11.15 M. Resonet in laudibus (arr Ledger), Coll Reg (Howells). The Holy Boy (Ireland). The Bishop of Lincoln: 3.45 E. Ding dong merrily on high/Coll Reg (Wood). A maiden most gentle (arr Carter). On Christmas night (arr Ldger). (26) 7.40 M: 8 HC; 5.15 EP.

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 10.30 Festival Euch. Coronation Mass (Mozart). The Bishop. (26) 3 Choral E.

LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL: 7, 8, 12.15 H Euch; 7.30 M; 9 Euch w procession: 10.45 S Euch w procession. Miss Brevis (Kodaly). Creed (Shaw). Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). The Bishop: 12.20 E. (St David Chapel). (26) 8.40 M; 9, 10 H Euch: 6 E.

MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8.45 MP; 9 HC: 10.30 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Mozart). The Bishop.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 8 HC. The Archdeacon of Northumberland: 9.30 S Euch. A child is born in Bethlehem (Malcolm Archer). Missa ad Praesepe (George Malcolm). What sweeter music (Rutter). The Provost.

NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 10.30 *Family Service*: Nativity of Our Lord. Special orders of service.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch. Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn). *In the bleak mid winter* (Darke). V Rev H Dickinson: 11.45 Family Service. They all were looking for a King. Canon J Davies: 3 E. Procession & Blessing of Crib. Responses (Rose). Stanford in A. Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck).

SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC: 10 MP: 10.30 Euch. The Provost: 3 EP. (26) 10 MP: 10.30 Euch: 3 EP.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch: 11 Choral Euch. Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn). Joys seven (arr Cleobury). The Lamb (Tavener). The Provost.

SOUTHWELL MINSTER: 8, 12.14 HC: 9.30 C. Responses (Shepherd). The Chancellor: 11 M. Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). The Provost: 3.15 E. (26) 7.30, 9.45 HC: 8 MP: 5.45 E.

TRURO CATHEDRAL: 8 HC: 9 M. The Curate: 10 S Euch. Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn). I saw three ships (arr Marshall). Away in a manger (arr Willcocks). The Bishop: 5.30 EP. (26) 9 M: 9.30 HC: 5.30 EP.

WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC. The Provost: 9.15 C. Canon D Baxter: 11 S Euch. Missa Brevis in b flat (Mozart). Creed III. The Bishop: 5 E.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 8 HC: 10.30 Euch. Stanford in B flat (Coronation Gloria). Glory to God (Handel). The Dean: 3 Festal E. Coll Reg (Howells). Fantasia on Christmas Carols (Vaughan Williams). (26) 8, 12.30 HC; 9.20 M; 4 E. Sumsion in G. A Ceremony of Carols (Britten).

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 7, 8, 9 for children & their families: 12 sung with carols; 10 MP: 10.30 SM. Missa O magnum mysterium (Victoria). Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). Quem vidistis pastores (Poulenc). Allegro from Sonata V BWV 529 (JS Bach). HE The Cardinal; 3.30 V&B. Magnificat primi toni (Bevan). The Lamb. (26) 8, 9, 12.30 M: 10 MP: 10.30 SM.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 7, 8 HC. Responses (Rose): 10.30 M. Te Deum & Jubilate in C (Stanford). Tomorrow shall be my dancing day (Willcocks). The Dean; 11.30 Euch. Messe Solennelle/Fetes (Langlais). Quem vidistis pastores (Poulenc): 3.30 E. Coll Reg (Howells). Fantasia on Christmas Carols (Vaughan Williams). (26) 8 HC (Lady Chapel): 12 HC (Epiphany Chapel). 5.30 E.

YORK MINSTER: 8, 8.45 HC: 10 S Euch. Schubert in G. O magnum mysterium (Gabrieli). Most Rev Dr David Hope: 11.30 M. Te Deum (Holst). Jubilate in C (Stanford). V Rev R Furnell: 4 E. Stanford in C. For unto us a child is born (Handel). (26) 7.30 M: 7.50, 12.30 HC: 5 EP.

ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC: 9.30 Euch. The Minor Canon: 11.15 Choral M. Ding dong merrily on high (arr Wood). Stanford in C. In the bleak midwinter (Darke). The Succentor: 4 EP. (26) 7.30 MP: 8 HC: 4.30 EP.

ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, Southwark: 8 M w/ carols; 10 Family M. Archbishop M Bowen: 11.30 Choral M. (26) 10 M.

ST GILES' CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8 MS HC. Rev D Robertson: 10 MS HC, Mass in G (Schubert). The Minister; 11.30 MS. Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). The Minister.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, London: 8 HC: 8.45 M; 11 S Euch. Missa brevis in b flat (Mozart). Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). The Dean: 3.15 E. Dyson in D. Responses (Smith). Jauchzet frohlocket (Bach). God is with us (Tavener). (26) 9, 12.30 HC: 9.30 M: 4 E: 5 Christmas music at the crib.

ALL SAINTS, Margaret Street, W1: 8 LM: 10.20 MP: 11 HM. Missa Brevis in B flat (Mozart). Hodie Christus natus est (Poulenc). The Vicar.

ALL SOULS, Langham Place, W1: 10.30 Family Service. Rev J Cook.

CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, Covent Garden, WC2: 11. Christmas day service.

HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, Brompton Road, SW7: 11 Family Service. Rev S Millar: 12.15 HC. Rev S Millar.

THE ORATORY, Brompton Road, SW7: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Mass. Missa Hodie Christus natus est (Palestrina). Hodie Christus natus est (Poulenc). 12.30, 4.30 M; 4 Benediction. Alma redemptoris (Fernande).

WESLEY'S CHAPEL, City Road, EC2: 11.30. Rev F Crewes & Rev P Hulme.

WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist), SW1: 10.30 Christmas day worship. Rev Dr P Graves.

ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), Gresham St, EC2: 11 Choral HC. Rev Dr H Hoffmann.

ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, Smithfield, EC1: 9 HC: 11 Family Euch.

ST BRIDE'S, Fleet Street, EC4: 11 Family Euch. Hodie Christus natus est (Weelkes). Jubilate in B flat (Stanford). Canon J Oates.

ST CLEMENT DANES: 11 Choral Euch. Mass in G (Schubert). Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). Rev P Bishop.

ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, Pont Street, SW1: 10 HC: 11 Family.

ST ETHELDREDA'S, Ely Place: 10, 11 M with carols. (26) 10 M.

ST GEORGE'S, Hanover Square, W1: 11 S Euch, Coronation Mass (Mozart). A Child this day is born (Sumsion). The Rector.

ST JAMES'S, Garlickhythe, EC4: 10.30 S Euch (1662). John Paul (Rector).

ST JAMES'S, Sussex Gardens, W2: 10.30 S Euch, Congregational Singing. Rev A Meldrum: 6 E.

ST JOHN'S, Stratford E15: 11 Family C, Rev D Richards.

ST LUKE'S, Chelsea, SW3: 8, 11.20 HC: 10.30 S Euch. The joys of Mary. Rev D Watson.

ST MARK'S, Regents Park Rd, NW1: 8 HC: 10.30 S Euch. Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn). Hodie Christus (Poulenc). Rev A Shaw.

ST MARGARET'S, Westminster, SW1: 11 M, Responses (Smith). Te Deum in B flat (Stanford). I saw three ships (Ledger). Rev Dr P Bradshaw: 12.15 HC.

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 10.30 Euch. *Lourdes Gloria (Stringer). Gloria in excelsis* Deo (Weelkes), Rev B Schunemann: 6.30 Carols & Readings. Rev B Schunemann.

ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, Kensington W8: 8, 12.30 HC: 9.30 Euch, Rev F Gelli; 11.15 Choral M. Vicar; 6.30 E.

ST MARY'S, Bourne Street, SW1: 9 LM: 10.30 HM. Missa octavi toni (Lassus), with carols, Fr B Scott.

ST MARY-THE-VIRGIN, Primrose Hill: 8 HC; 10.30 Festal Euch, Rev L van der Pump.

ST MARYLEBONE, Marylebone Road, W1: 8 HC; 10 Choral Euch. Missa solemnis K337 (Mozart). Gaude et laetare (Sweelinck ed. Russill). Rev R McLaren. (26) 10 HC.

ST PAUL'S, Wilton Place, SW1: 9 HC: 11 Choral Euch. Missa Jugendmesse (Haydn). Hodie Christus natus est (Poulenc). Rev H Ruschmeyer.

ST PETER'S, Eaton Square, SW1: 8.15 HC: 10 Family Euch. Carols; 11 S Euch, Missa O Magnum Mysterium (Victoria). Fr A Chidwick.

ST STEPHEN'S, Gloucester Road, SW7: 8, 9 LM: 11 SM. Missa secunda (Hassler). Fr N Cocking.

CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC: 11 M. Vaughan Williams in G. The Lamb (Tavener). Responses (Rose).

QUEEN'S CHAPEL OF THE SAVOY, WC2: 11 S Euch. Darke in F. The Chaplain.

THE TEMPLE CHURCH, Fleet Street: 8.30 HC: 11.15 MP HC. Responses (Radcliffe). Te Deum Laudamus (Vaughan Williams in G). Dyson in D. Gloria in excelsis Deo (Weelkes). The Master.

GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks, SW1: 11 M. Hodie Christus natus est (Sweelinck). In dulci jubilo (arr Pearsall). The Chaplain: 12 HC.

ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE CHAPEL, Greenwich, SE10: 11 S Euch (BCP). Darke in F. Christ was born on Christmas Day (Trad). Rev C French.

BMD'S: 0171 782 7272
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

Allow no one, therefore, to take you to task about what you eat or drink, or over the observance of festival, new moon, or sabbath.
Colossians 2 : 16 (REB)

BIRTHS

DESJARDINE - On December 20th at The Portland Hospital, to Julianne (née Dufour) and Clayton, a beautiful son, Avery Clayton, a brother for Jillian.

DREWETT - On December 20th at Harold Wood Hospital, to Pauline and Timothy, a daughter, Rebecca Charlotte.

HARPER - On 23rd November 1995 at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, to David and Fiona, a son, Angus Lachlan Elliott.

JEFFCOCK - On December 21st 1995 at Lymington Hospital, to George and Sara, a daughter, Imogen, a sister for Chloe and Oliver.

JONES - On December 12th 1995, at Harrogate General Hospital, to Dee and Nick, a son, Jack Henry Rostron.

KNIGHT - On December 19th, to Janice and Roger, a son, Edmund James, a brother for Elizabeth.

MACPHERSON - On December 17th 1995, to Katrina (née MacLeod) and Fergus, a son, Hamish.

MILLS - On 17th December at Tiverton Hospital, to Charles and Fanny, a son, Samuel Charles.

NEWMAN - On December 18th to Victoria (née Chamberlain) and Jonathan, a daughter Harriet Laura.

TURNER
Angela (née Hurst) and Neale
are pleased to announce the
safe arrival of a son
Oliver George Henry
on 19th December 1995
at the Burton District
Hospital,
Burton-upon-Trent.
Many thanks to all in
attendance.

BIRTHS

PARK - On 20th December, to Diane and Lister, a daughter, Alicia.

PHILLIPS - On 10th December 1995, to Connie and Patrick, a precious daughter, Chloe Laurina.

REID - On December 19th at The Portland Hospital, to Stephanie (née Hyams) and Richard, a beautiful daughter, Gabriella, a sister for Daniel.

SHAMASH - On December 19th at The Portland Hospital, Ann and Ronnie are thrilled at the birth of their daughter, Samantha. Mazeltov to grandparents Marilyn and Ian Kaye, Sara and Moshe Shamash, and great-grandparents.

SHAW - On December 21st, to Julia (née Bristow) and Chris, a baby boy, Alexander.

TAYLOR - On December 20th at The John Radcliffe, Oxford, to Emma (née Cowling) and Simon, a daughter, Holly Jane Cowling.

WEST - Deborah and David are pleased to announce the birth of their son Benjamin Sidney on 20th December 1995 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

WHITE - On December 20th at The Portland Hospital, to Mary (née Hemmings) and Nick, a son, James, a brother for Henry.

WOODWARD GENTLE - To Sally and Henry, a son, Milo Emmanuel, born 1st December, a brother for Ella and Fred.

DEATHS

ATWILL - Ada (Nan) in Shrewsbury on 21st December 1995 in her 98th year, widow of Billy, greatly loved mother of Dulcie and grandmother of Penny. Formerly of Nairobi, Kenya. Enquiries tel: (01743) 344646.

BLENCH - Nicolas I.M. Blench FCA aged 52, suddenly at home in Weybridge after a long illness borne with great courage. Dearly beloved son of the late Walter Blench DFC and Mrs Etta Chandler. Funeral Wednesday January 3rd, 2pm at St John's Crematorium, Woking. Family flowers only, donations if desired to Cancer Relief MacMillan Fund, c/o F W Chitty & Co, 45 Elm Grove Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8PB (01932 842220).

BORLAND - A. "Keith" on 20th December aged 83 died peacefully in his sleep after a battle against cancer. Funeral at Guildford Crematorium on Thursday 28th December at 12.30 pm. No flowers please. Donations to Macmillan Service Midhurst, King Edward VII Hospital, Midhurst, W. Sussex GU29 0BL.

BUTLER-FRASER - Pierce, died peacefully on November 29th, much loved husband, brother and uncle.

CARROLL - Elizabeth née Tiszkiewicz Primo Voto L. Lubienska on 20th December 1995. Much beloved mother of Rula, Gaba, Anna and Andrew and grandmother of Lara, Marc and Izabella. Funeral Service at the Chapel of Maria Assumpta, 23 Kensington Square, London W8 at 2pm 3rd January 1996. Donations if desired to Medical Aid for Poland, 16 Warwick Road, London SW5 9UD or the Sikorski Institute 20 Princes Gate London SW7 1PT.

CARTER - On Tuesday December 19th 1995, Mollie Christina (née Sanders), widow of Dr. Alan Barham Carter of St George's Hill, Weybridge, beloved mother and grandmother. Funeral at St Mark's Church, Whiteley Village, Walton-on-Thames, on Friday January 5th 1996 at 11 am. No flowers but donations to The Friends of Weybridge Hospital.

CASTLE - Ellen Marie in her sleep on December 21st in her 90th year. She will be sadly missed as mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

CHANCELLOR - Antony Charles Beresford. Suddenly on December 21st 1995, aged 66 years. Beloved husband of Honor and devoted father of James, Andrew, David and the late Sarah, proud grandfather of Rex and Henry. Private cremation followed by Thanksgiving Service at North Wraxall Church, near Chippenham, on Thursday 28th December at 2.30 pm. Donations if desired to C.L.I.C. Bristol. All enquiries to M. Jones Funeral Directors (01249) 662626.

DORMER - Sir Joseph Spencer Philip 16th Baron Dormer, aged 81 years, on 21st December, peacefully at home. Date of requiem and funeral to be announced. R.I.P.

DRAPKIN - On 20th December 1995, suddenly in hospital, Joan Mavis, aged 80. Widow of Eric and much loved mother of Adrian and Peter. Funeral Service Poole Crematorium 1.30 pm Friday, 29th December. Family flowers only by request but if desired, donations for British Diabetic Association may be sent to Deric-Scott, Portman Lodge Funeral Home, 755 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, BH7 6AN.

DRUMMOND - On December 22nd, peacefully in his sleep, James Arthur Lawrence Commander RN (retd.), aged 90 of 29 Abbey Mews, Amesbury Abbey, Wilts. Funeral 1.40pm Thursday 4th January at Salisbury Crematorium. Flowers to Gerald W. Burden (Funeral Dirs.) Phoenix, Church Street, Amesbury, Wilts SP4

EARDLEY-WILMOT - Commander Sir John Assheton Eardley-Wilmot Bt. L.V.O. D.S.C. R.N. Retired. Dearly loved husband of Diana and father of Michael and Patsie. Cremation at Mortlake, Wednesday, January 3rd at 2.30 pm. Flowers to Kenyon, 49 Marloes Road.

EGLINGTON - On December 22nd 1995 peacefully in Wimbledon, Treena aged 88, widow of Dick and much loved mother of Charles, Walter and Michael and grandmother of William, Lucy, Robert, Katherine, Richard and Clare. Funeral Service at Putney Vale Crematorium on Tuesday January 2nd 1996 at 11 am. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Friends of the Elderly, 42 Ebury Street, London SW1W 0LZ.

ELLERD-STYLES - On 20th December, peacefully in her 100th year, Barbara (née Ashby) of Kingsdown, Deal. Widow of Paymaster Captain Frank Monk RNR, who was lost at sea in 1942, and of Bill Ellerd-Styles. Beloved mother of Leonard and Tony Monk and a loving grandmother and great-grandmother. Funeral Service at Barham Crematorium on Thursday, 28th December at 12.30 pm. No flowers please, but donations if desired to Leukaemia Research Fund c/o E.B. Cavell, 25 Albert Road, Deal, to help fight the disease from which Anstace, her much loved granddaughter, died last year.

FRANKLIN - Dr Owen Geoffrey Franklin, GP and artist died peacefully, surrounded by his family on 20th December 1995 at University College hospital, aged 62 years, having bravely fought cancer for 3½ years. Dearly loved by Sonja, his wife of 31 years, sons Sasha and Fadja, their wives Talia and Tanja, his grandchildren Abe and Mallie, brothers Roger and Joe, sister Nina, cousin Angela and many other family and friends. Funeral service to be held at Golders Green Crematorium (West Chapel), Hoop Lane, London NW11 on Friday 29th December at 1pm. Instead of flowers the family would appreciate donations to (Hodgkin's Disease and Lymphoma Association) PO Box 275, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP17 8JJ. (registered charity 294642).

FORD - Basil, retired Master Mariner, husband of the late Audrey, on December 21st at Westacre Nursing Home Winchester. Funeral on Tuesday January 2nd at St. Lawrence Church, Winchester at 2.15pm followed by Cremation. All welcome. Enq's to JNO Steel & Son, Chesil House, Winchester. 01962 844044.

GRANT - Brigadier Francis Grant died peacefully on 19th December 1995, beloved husband of Kathlyn and the late May, loving father of Lesley and Gavin. The funeral service will be at Canford Crematorium, Canford Lane, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, on Thursday 28th December 11.30 am. No flowers please but if desired donations for The British Heart Foundation may be sent to R.G. Rawlings Ltd. Funeral Directors, 5 Woodlands Road, Clevedon, Avon, BS21 7QD.

INGHAM - Ronald, loving husband of the late Joyce (Little) and father of Maureen, Charles, Kevin, Susan and the late Julia, died 21st December, aged 76, in Harare, Zimbabwe. Funeral 28th December in Harare. Any donations to the Friends of Peterhouse College, Cambridge.

JENYNS - On 21st December 1995, Anne Thomson, widow of Soame, mother of Roger and John and grandmother of Clare, Frances and George. Funeral 11.30 am on 28th December at Bottisham Church. Donations to Arthur Rank Hospice, Brookfield Road, Cambridge.

KIMBER - Derek Barton, on December 21st 1995 peacefully at home after a long illness silently borne. Dearly loved husband of the late Gwen (died 8th December 1995) and much loved father of Simon, Jeremy, Elizabeth and Jane. Greatly loved by all his grandchildren and family. Funeral Service at St Jude's Church, Englefield Green, 12.30 pm, Friday December 29th 1995. Enquiries to F. Harrison & Son, (01784) 432163.

MARSHALL-ANDREWS - Eileen Norah, teacher, traveller and much loved mother, grandmother and friend, at Kent & Sussex Hospital on 21st December 1995. A memorial service will be held at Shoreham church, Shoreham, Kent on 3rd February 1996 at 12 noon. All who knew Norah, worked with her or were taught by her are invited to attend. Information phone 0181 940 0911

MINOPRIO - Tricia, on 21st December 1995, peacefully amongst her family, after a courageous fight against cancer. Beloved wife of Charles, mother of Victoria, George and Charlotte and sister to Robert, Andrew and Catherine. The funeral will take place at All Saints Church, Milton Ernest, Bedford at 2.00pm on Thursday Decemebr 28th. No flowers, donations, if desired, to Cancer Research.

MITCHELL - Peacefully at home on Thursday 21st December 1995, Elspeth (née Findlay), wife of the late Moncrieff Mitchell and much loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Funeral Service in Drymen Parish Church on Wednesday 27th December at 11.15 am. Cremation thereafter private. No flowers please. Donations if desired to Hunters Hill Marie Curie Centre, Community Nursing, 1 Belmont Road, Glasgow G21 3AY.

NEWMAN - Dr. Leslie William James, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., D.I.C., Ph.D., C.Eng., F.R.Ae.S., Wing Commander R.A.F.V.R. (Retd). On Thursday December 21st peacefully after a short illness, adored and adoring husband of Audrey, much loved and loving proud father of Brian and Martin, loved and indulgent Grandpa of Alastair, Edward and Timothy. Service of Thanksgiving at The Minster, Wimborne, Dorset, on Friday December 29th at 2.45 pm. Family flowers only please but donations, if desired, to The Lodge of St Cuthburga or Barnardo's or Wimborne Minster, c/o Charles Small and Son, 15-17 West Street, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1JR.

NICOLSON - Major Malise Allen Nicolson M.C. On 22nd December, peacefully after a courageous fight against a long illness. Dearly loved by his family. Service of Thanksgiving to be announced in the New Year.

PARSONS - Rupert of Dunch Lane, Melksham, died on December 20th, aged 46. Funeral service at Christ's Church, Shaw, Wiltshire on December 29th at 2.30pm. Simple flowers only. Very much loved and very much missed.

PITCHFORD - Dr. Alan Gordon, peacefully on December 21st 1995 aged 66 years, of Stow on the Wold, Glos. Beloved husband of the late Barbara, a sadly missed father, father-in-law and grandfather. A Service of Thanksgiving for Alan's life will be held at The Methodist Church, Stow on the Wold, on Friday December 29th at 2.30 pm. No flowers by request but donations for The Leukaemia Research Fund may be sent to W.J. Wright, Funeral Director, Well Lane, Stow on the Wold, Cheltenham, Glos. GL54 1DG.

RICHARDSON - On 20th December 1995 peacefully at home, Olga, wife of the late Sir Henry Richardson. Funeral Service at St James' Church, Abinger Common, near Dorking, on Friday 29th December at 3 pm. No flowers. Donations for Cancer Research may be sent to Sherlock & Sons, Trellis House, Dorking, tel: (01306) 882266.

ROBINSON - On 20th December 1995 at Torbay Hospital, Devon, Dr. Alan Wellwood Wade Robinson, aged 87. Memorial Service 3pm Friday 19th January 1996. All enquiries to T. Clark Funeral Services, (01626) 775141.

ROCHFORD - On 21st December, peacefully after a short illness Diana Mary of Aldeburgh, Suffolk. Dearly loved sister and aunt. Funeral Service at St. Andrew's Church, Aldringham on Friday 29th December at 1.45pm. Followed by Private Cremation. No flowers but donations if wished made payable to R.S.P.B. c/o Tony Browns Funeral Service, Saxmundham.

SANDERSON - On December 21st peacefully at Southwold Hospital, Frederica. Cremation at Gorleston Crematorium at 12.30pm on Friday December 29th, followed by Memorial Service at St Edmund's Church, Southwold at 2.30pm. Flowers to Fishers (Southwold) Ltd., Field Stile Road, Southwold.

SOULSBY - Hugh Graham (Retired Colonial Administration Uganda), peacefully in hospital on 20th December 1995 two days before his 91st birthday, beloved husband of Elizabeth and proud father of Carol, Corin and Sarah and sons-in-law Alan and Roger and Grandpa of James, Daniel, Tabitha, Leigh and Orlando Hugh. Funeral Service at 2 pm on Wednesday 27th December at Stanford in the Vale Church, Oxfordshire.

STROMBERG - (née Barclay) Mrs C.A. (Nan) died suddenly on December 19th 1995. Funeral Service at Putney Vale Crematorium on Wednesday 27th December at 11 am. Flowers to Chelsea Funeral Directors, 260B Fulham Road, SW10, (0171) 352-0008.

TANNER - F.P. (Bob) Tanner, OBE. It is with great regret that we announce the death of F.P. (Bob) Tanner, formerly Managing Director of Howson-Algraphy Limited, Leeds. He died peacefully on Sunday, 10th December 1995 at the age of 84. He will be sadly missed by his family and friends. The funeral took place on Monday 18th December. Donations in his memory can be sent to the Printers Charitable Corporation, Victoria House, Harstone Valley Road, Caterham, Surrey. CR3 6HT.

WARD - On Wednesday 20th December 1995, John Newman Ward, beloved brother of Marjorie, father of Nicholas, Rodney and Michael, grandfather of Alexandra, Natasha, Samantha and Clarissa and former husband of Vivienne. Service at St Mary's Church, Kippington, Sevenoaks, Friday 29th December 1995 at 1.45 pm, followed by interment at Greatness Park Cemetery. Family flowers only but if so desired donations to Royal National Institute for the Deaf c/o Welham Jones, 166 London Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1DJ. Tel: (01732) 742400.

IN MEMORIAM — PRIVATE

BARSI - Today on the first death anniversary of Lt.Gen.Habibullah Khan Khattak we invite his well wishers to join us in prayers for his departed soul whether at home or with us at 1 Jerome Street, 5 Glendower Place, London SW7 between 4-7 pm (23d December, 1995).

PARIKIAN - In loving memory of Manoug Parikian who died on Christmas Eve, 1987.

SADLER - In loving memory of Malcolm Sadler who died 23rd December 1965. From Lalage, Simon, Crispin and Astrid.

TICKETS FOR SALE

TICKETS
FOR SALE
When responding to
advertisements
readers are advised to
establish the face value and
full details of tickets before
entering into any
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ALL TICKETS: Int. Rugby, Phantom, R.dance, Clapton, Simply Red. All major pop, sport & theatre. CC's accept 0171 925 0080

W.R.U. Debenture seats for sale (50 years) Best location Cardiff Arms Park 01446 730730

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OBITUARIES

SIR TRENCHARD COX

Sir Trenchard Cox, CBE, Director and Secretary of the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1956-66, died on December 21 aged 90. He was born on July 31, 1905.

TRENCHARD COX made his mark in the art world by qualities of character which endeared him to his colleagues at every level. Although he was neither an outstanding sholar nor a great connoisseur, his integrity, personal modesty and charm gave him the ability to get the best from his staff, a trait which many would regard as his highest accomplishment.

He was of an old Dorsetshire family, the son of William Pallett Cox. From Eton he went to King's College, Cambridge, where he took a first-class degree in the Modern Languages Tripos. Throughout life he remained an accomplished linguist with a variety of European languages at his command.

In the years immediately after his graduation he worked as an unpaid attaché at the National Gallery and, later, in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. Subsequently he spent a semester at Berlin University under Goldschmidt, studying the history of art, a subject then offered by no British university. A short period at the Sorbonne led to the publication of his first (apart from the brief *The National Gallery, a Room to Room Guide*, 1930) and most important book, a study of the French Renaissance manuscript painter and portrait artist, *Jehan Foucquet, Native of Tours*, which appeared in 1931.

As a consequence of his work on Foucquet he was invited to collaborate with W. G. Constable on the catalogue of the great exhibition of French Art held at the Royal Academy in the winter of 1931-32. This led, shortly afterwards, to his appointment as assistant to the Director of the Wallace Collection with its rich assemblage of French 18th century paintings. While at the Wallace Collection he prepared two popular booklets: *A General Guide to the Wallace Collection* (1933) and *A Short Illustrated History of the Wallace Collection and its Founders* (1936); both of these enjoyed considerable popular success at the time.

At the outbreak of the Second World War the keeper of the Wallace Collection, James (later Sir James) Mann, was abroad and it fell to Cox to supervise the evacuation of its contents from London, a difficult administrative task which he carried out with conspicuous success. Almost immediately afterwards he was seconded to the Home Office, where he became private secretary to Sir Alexander Maxwell, the Permanent Under-Secretary. It was the qualities as an administrator that he displayed in this post which led to his appointment in 1944 as Director of the City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

There for the first time, his true abilities found the scope they needed and his persuasive powers and charm enabled him to obtain from the city fathers the necessary finance with which he developed a relatively ordinary provincial museum into one of the great art centres in this country outside London. He built up a large and active body of Friends of the Museum, arranged a series of important loan exhibitions and created an important new section devoted to Science and Industry, subjects in whose development Birmingham had played an important historic role. Above all he obtained for the first time, the necessary funds to purchase important additions to the collection.

His success at Birmingham led to his appointment as Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1956, on the retirement of Sir Leigh Ashton. The appointment came as something of a surprise to him, and it is said that arriving on his first morning in the office — before the museum was open and by a side door

— he was asked by the doorkeeper who he was. "Oh, I work here now," was his characteristically modest reply.

He was self-effacing to a fault and visitors to South Kensington remained entirely unaware that the striking rearrangement of the display of the historic musical instruments and the costume department, at that time, was due to his inspiration. In addition he carried out a total reorganisation of the library as well as creating the conservation department.

But his mark was principally made by the excellence of his staff relations (not always easy in a large museum). His memory for minutiae enabled him to recall the Christian names of every member of the staff, and he seldom forgot to inquire about the families of the attendants and warders as he passed through the galleries, usually knowing the exact number and names of their children, and other important details of their private lives. All, from top to bottom of the large staff, were welcome at the spacious flat where he and his wife lived near by, and which became known as the "Cox Arms" on this account. In spite of this, it is doubtful if he was ever quite as happy at South Kensington as he had been in recreating the museum in Birmingham.

A hard worker, Cox was always at his desk in the museum by 9am, well before most of his senior staff, yet he found time to become the active secretary-general of the International Council of Museums and in 1963 was president of the Museums Association. Unfortunately he suffered from an affliction of the eyesight which two operations failed entirely to correct, and in 1966 he determined, on this account, to retire prematurely.

For many years he was the People's Warden of St Martin-in-the-Fields and played an active role in the work for down-and-outs in the crypt of the church. In addition to a ready pen, Cox spoke with ease and fluency, so that in his retirement he was in great demand as a lecturer on Hellenic and other tours, as well as in the United States. He added to his publications with two studies, *David Cox* (1947) and *Peter Bruegel* (1951), and the useful *Pictures: a Handbook for Curators* (1956).

In retirement he became president of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, when it was formed in 1968 and served it in that office until his death. He worked tirelessly to build it up to its present membership of 71,000. The association's aims, the promotion of the education of the public and the preservation of our artistic heritage, were well served by his encouragement and organisation of the efforts of its volunteer members and through his arranging guest speakers for its events.

Cox was appointed CBE in 1954 and knighted in 1961; he was appointed a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur in 1967.

In 1935 he married Mary Désirée, daughter of Sir Hugh Anderson, Master of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and a noted antiquarian. She died in 1974. There were no children.

JOHN KIRK

John Kirk, CBE, Chief Economic Adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture, 1959-65, and Professor of Marketing at Wye College, London University, 1965-72, died on December 2 aged 88. He was born in Natal on April 11, 1907.

AS HEAD of the powerful economics and statistics division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, John Henry Kirk played a major part in the wartime and postwar development of farm policy. In August 1947 a four-year expansion programme was announced, intended to raise the net output of British agriculture by 50 per cent above prewar levels. The ministry looked to Kirk to see how this could be achieved.

Kirk had joined the ministry in 1934, having studied economics under Keynes at Cambridge. Despite the strict rules of anonymity and secrecy observed in Whitehall, most agricultural economists felt they could detect the judicious hand of Kirk in the drafting of the most crucial paragraphs of the 1947 Agriculture Act, some of which were to be highly influential in the shaping of legislation and consultation procedures in other parts of the world, including Brussels.

Kirk had built up a strong team of economists around him by the time the 1947 Act was passed. Working closely with the ministry's policy-makers and with members of the farmers' unions, Kirk and his team helped to put into effect the Act, which was to prove a flexible and enduring instrument for the development of agricultural policy in Britain.

Another of Kirk's achievements was the development of working links between agricultural economists in the ministry and those in British universities by the consolidation of the Provincial Agricultural Economics Service. This ensured the continuity and comparability of investigations into the economic situation at farm level.

In 1957 Kirk was appointed CBE and two years later he was made Chief Economic Adviser at the ministry, with the rank of Under-Secretary. However, anticipating compulsory retirement from the Civil Service at the age of 60, he accepted in 1965 the newly established Chair of Marketing (with special reference to horticulture) at Wye College, University of London.

On his retirement from Wye College in 1972, Kirk occupied himself in his roles as a member of the Covent Garden Market Authority and of the Apple and Pear Development Council. He found relaxation in tending his garden in the Kent village of Wye.

Apart from his contributions to several journals of sociology, economics and agricultural economics, Kirk published three important books during his lifetime. The first, *Economic Aspects of Native Segregation*, published in 1922, was a socio-economic study of South Africa, where he grew up, and of the United States where he lived in the early 1930s, having been awarded the Commonwealth Fund Fellowship. His other two books were *Agriculture and the Trade Cycle* (1933) and *United Kingdom Agricultural Policy 1870-1970* (1982).

John Kirk is survived by his wife Wilfrida and two sons.

FRANCIS GYSIN

Francis Gysin, documentary film-maker, died on November 23 aged 74. He was born on July 28, 1921.

FRANCIS GYSIN was one of the last links with the vigorous British documentary film movement of the 1930s and 1940s. He stood in a tradition which included John Grierson, Basil Wright and Donald Alexander. His own contribution to the genre was made as head of the National Coal Board's film unit from 1963 until 1986.

This unit had been established by his friend Donald Alexander in the early 1950s, and produced thirty films a year, as well as the monthly film magazine *Mining Review* which was put out on general release. Much of its output was workaday stuff — training and safety films shown in collieries, for example — but the unit could be hired out by third parties to make documentaries on all sorts of other subjects, such as the introduction of plastic money. In this way it helped to pay for itself.

For many years, Gysin's unit was the largest documentary film unit in the country — perhaps in the Western world — with thirty or forty permanent staff. Over the three decades it was in operation, its films came to constitute a unique record of social life in Britain, and particularly of its disappearing industrial landscape. When the unit was wound down in the mid-1980s, the end of an era of public service documentaries was in sight. The unit's films are now lodged in the archives of the British Film Institute.

Gysin provided a unique training ground for technicians and cameramen, many of whom subsequently distinguished themselves in mainstream television and films. He had the air of a newspaper man — fast in his reactions, with the journalist's instinct for a good story. He could make up his mind about a project in a minute, and write an excellent script in half an hour. He also showed immense physical courage in some trying situations. He would think nothing, for example, of balancing precariously on a steel girder with his cameraman, hundreds of feet in the air, in order to get just the right shot.

Francis Gysin was born in London of a Swiss father, who worked in the City, and a Scottish mother. He was educated at Highgate School and, as a scholar, at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, where he read modern languages. It was there that he became a compulsive film-watcher, when he discovered that he studied best very late at night, while the rest of the college was asleep. During the day he haunted the town's cinemas, and he became secretary to the university's Film Society.

After graduation in the early 1940s, he started his career in earnest as the protégé of the great documentary film-maker Paul Rotha. Gysin was associate director on Rotha's *Land Of Promise*, which studied the problems of housing, and *A City Speaks*, about local government. In 1944 several of Rotha's colleagues broke away and founded a new co-operative, Data Films. It was here that Gysin first made films for the coal industry, shooting stories for *Mining Review* (the making of which, before the days of the NCB's own film unit, was subcontracted). Gysin worked alongside the slightly older Donald Alexander at Data as a producer and director. A documentary on Scottish universities was a particular success of his there.

In 1959 he moved to Venezuela to run Shell Oil's film unit. But by 1963 the civil unrest in Caracas had become acute, and Gysin returned to Britain where he could provide a safer home for his family. On his return he succeeded Donald Alexander as head of the NCB's (later British Coal's) film unit, remaining there until his retirement in 1986.

Gysin deplored the destruction of the mining industry and the closure of the pits. He also held out against the use of video during his last years in the industry. It was never, in his opinion, a replacement for film.

In his retirement in Hertfordshire, he continued to read five or six books a week, and to complete *The Times* crossword every day at lightning speed.

His wife Kathy died in 1987, and he is survived by his son and daughter.

WING COMMANDER PETER SWAN

Wing Commander Peter Swan, DSO, DFC and Bar, member of the wartime Pathfinder Force, died on November 27 aged 75. He was born on January 2, 1920.

Swan, left, and a member of his crew with their de Havilland Mosquito

LIKE Donald Bennett, the dynamic founder and leader of the Pathfinder Force, Peter Swan was an Australian, as was his station commander in 1944, Wallace "Digger" Kyle. Together these men brought an antipodean robustness and a certain lack of regard for red tape to a force which made the most effective contribution to the bombing offensive against Germany, bringing a new accuracy to night bombing by marking targets with flares, ahead of the main bomber force.

But before joining the PFF Swan had been a member of 139 Squadron in the Light Night Striking Force of Mosquitoes, which had made a name for itself in precision attacks on targets as far afield as the Gestapo headquarters in Oslo, the big diesel engine works in Copenhagen and the main broadcasting station in Berlin (which succeeded in disrupting a propaganda speech by Goering). The Mosquito was particularly remarkable for being able to go to Berlin with a 4,000lb bomb, relying on sheer speed to evade fighter defences, while its all-wood construction (its skin was a tough ply-balsa-ply sandwich) was better proof against flak than that of many metal aircraft.

From one such raid Swan was lucky to return when his radio was put out of action by anti-aircraft fire over Berlin and he had to fly home on dead reckoning. Totally disorientated for much of the way by the dense cloud cover, he suddenly found himself caught in what he thought was a hostile searchlight beam over the Zuyder Zee, and was about to take violent evasive action when he realised that he was, in fact, over the Wash and that the beam was coming from a friendly airfield. Highly relieved, he followed it down and made a safe landing.

London born, Peter Harrison Swan was taken to Australia by his parents as a very young child and grew up in Melbourne, where he went to school and then studied to become a chartered accountant. But with war looming he joined the RAAF and after completing his flying training in Canada he came to Britain in 1941 and joined 105 (Blenheim) Squadron. The first of his brushes with death came not over an enemy target but when his bomber was subjected to a mock attack by the pilot of a Beaufighter. Completely mistiming his attacking pass, the Beaufighter's pilot clipped the tailplane of the Blenheim which went into an uncontrollable spin. Swan managed to bale out just 500ft from the ground, but in doing so was smashed against his aircraft's tailfin and badly broke both legs.

He was out of action, in hospital and recuperating, for a year before he was able to return to operations. Even in hospital he was not safe. While he was under anaesthetic during one of a series of operations performed on his injured legs, the hospital was attacked by German bombers which wrecked the operating theatre. When Swan came to, he was spattered with blood from one of the operating team.

After his period with 139 Squadron, Swan joined the Pathfinders in 1944, flying on many operational missions, some of which, like the raid on U-boat pens in Norway, were executed by day when smoke markers, not flares, were used to indicate the target. Swan also flew sorties over the battlefields of North West Europe. He flew a total of 94 operations for which he was awarded the DSO and two DFCs.

After the end of the war in Europe, Swan was put in charge of an RAAF squadron repatriating Australian PoWs. But with Allied air operations against Japan intensifying in preparation for a possible invasion of the mainland, he was given command of an operational squadron which was earmarked for "Tiger Force". This was to be a unit of Allied squadrons skilled in precision bombing (one of them was the RAF's 617 "Dambuster" Squadron) whose job would be the destruction of the bridges connecting Kyushu to the main Japanese island of Honshu, thus cutting off reinforcements in the event of an American landing, which was planned for January 1946. In the event the Japanese surrender in the wake of the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki obviated the need for such precision bombing. Tiger Force was never called upon to go to war.

Swan went back to Australia after VJ-Day, but while he was in London for the victory parade he met a stockbroker friend who offered him a job. He accepted it and never returned to Australia, making a career with the City firm Phillips and Drew until his retirement in 1982.

He is survived by his wife Jess and by their two sons and a daughter.

ON THIS DAY

December 23, 1933

Until the mid 1940s Points from Letters complemented the more weighty correspondence on the leader page.

Points from Letters

SWANS IN FLIGHT

I saw a strangely beautiful sight at 2.35 p.m. on December 21, which I think is not often to be seen in London. Over Kensington Road, near Queen's Gate, flying low in a south-westerly direction, were seven swans in arrow-head formation. They were so low that I was surprised not to hear the creaking sound that usually accompanies their flight. The day being grey and with a still mist brooding over everything, it was all the more impressive to see these great birds suddenly sweep overhead and go on their way, so purposefully, above the roaring traffic. It would be interesting to know whether anyone observed them alight and what was their destination. They were apparently from the Serpentine, but from the direction and vigour of their flight it would seem that they were started on a journey.——Mr. Ernest Blaikley, 31, Stanley Gardens, N.W.3.

NOTICES IN CHURCH PORCHES

The notice-boards in front of places of worship are now being covered (as every year) with bills, one lengthy, giving elaborate technical details ruling the method of taxation of motor vehicles, and another reminding any persons liable to pay for licences to have armorial bearings or employ man-servants that those taxes are now due. May I suggest that in the entrances of churches these bills are never read, that they are an unwarranted invasion of a place many worshippers would prefer to keep free from such suggestions, and that the abolition of the law requiring their posting in such places would be an economy?——The Rev. T. Wilfrid Scholes, Wesley House, Ampthill, Beds.

THE DAY OF THE WEEK

Sir Walter Shaw's suggestion that we might convert our time into a 10-hour day emboldens me to suggest another, perhaps fantastic, reform which would surely be of much greater convenience than any change in the hours, and that is that the year should be divided into 13 months of 28 days each. The advantage of knowing on what day of the week a certain day of a month will fall throughout the year and the avoidance of having to learn horrid little rhymes in order to remember how many days there are in any month appear, at any rate to me, to be very considerable.——Mr. Oliver H. Haslam, Cairngill, near Dalbeattie, Scotland.

THE DEMAND FOR SPEED

Most of the aggregate mileage performed by motor vehicles is not for pleasure but for business, that is, the conveyance of persons or goods. If these were conveyed at a slower speed the increased time of the journey would mean increased cost, which would fall upon the consumer. The consumer (generally a non-motorist) demands cheapness in service and goods; it is he who is responsible for the increased speed of transport. Is the consumer willing to pay for goods and service in order to reduce the dangers of the road? The householder, indignant because he cannot cross the road, is more indignant if the goods he has ordered from a distance are not delivered in time.——Mr. C. Willett Cunnington, Tatchley House, Dollis Avenue, Finchley.

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRUSTEE ACTS

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to s27 of the TRUSTEE Act, 1925 that any person having a CLAIM against or an INTEREST in the ESTATE of any of the deceased person's whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified: after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

JOSEPH MARC SHELDON of 10 Westbourne Gardens London W2 Antique Dealer Retired died on 28 September 1995 Particulars to Harbottle & Lewis, Hanover House, 14 Hanover Square, London W1R 0BE - Executor: Charles Ernest Felipes - Claims before 3 March 1996

XMAS GREETINGS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOB & KAYE KELLY both have flu. We made it to letter D in our address books. If you are E onwards, many apologies and a very Happy Christmas

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THE TIMES
NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
To place your Birth, Marriage or Death Notices over the Christmas Holiday period please call during the following times:-
Saturday 23rd December: 9.30 - 12.30
CLOSED:- Monday 25th & Tuesday 26th December
Telephone 0171 782 7272
where our staff will be available to take your call.

THE TIMES TODAY

SATURDAY DECEMBER 23 1995

NEWS

Storm over lottery grant refusal

■ A new row over the way lottery grants are distributed erupted after Virginia Bottomley, Heritage Secretary, refused to give £50 million of lottery cash to the developers of a new opera house in Cardiff. Instead, the Millennium Commission, one of the five bodies charged with distributing lottery cash to "good causes", awarded £46 million to five environmental projects and five local community schemes .... **Pages 1, 4**

Bleak midwinter traffic crawl

■ The joys of Christmas were muted for millions forced to contend with jams, rain, snow, and floods. But like King Wenceslas, undeterred by hostile weather, an estimated 25 million took to roads, rail and air as the holiday got under way ... **Pages 1, 2**

Polar triumph

A Norwegian adventurer succeeded where the British explorer Roger Mear recently failed when he reached the South Pole ...... **Page 1**

Catch question

Tony Baldry, returned from Brussels claiming to have won a victory for the fishing industry. Fishermen did not agree.............. **Page 2**

Burglars' view

Burglars stole antiques worth £41,000 from the home of the Duke and Duchess of Grafton as the couple watched the duchess and the Queen on TV .... **Page 3**

Fathers killed

Eight children lost their fathers when three men died in an explosion at an offshore-rig construction yard.......................... **Page 5**

Sing song merrily

A church historian has gathered evidence that few of the best-loved carols are the ancient hymns many think them to be ...... **Page 6**

Expensive cover up

The bill for the average Christmas has gone up by £5 this year - largely because of new fashions in gift wrapping .... **Page 7**

Nurse under siege

Annie Sewell, the British-born nurse who masterminds the Red Cross medical operation in the besieged Kabul, has a reputation for getting things done ..... **Page 11**

Whitewater release

The White House surrendered subpoenaed documents on the Whitewater affair.............. **Page 11**

Shepherds dying out

The shepherds, who as Luke's Gospel states were "keeping watch over their flocks by night", are a dying breed .... **Page 11**

Corruption challenge

The former magistrate who led the Italian *tangentopoli* crackdown, is fighting a challenge to his integrity that could lead to him standing trial .... **Page 12**

The Fat One gives £185m to the poor

■ Majorca was filled with Christmas cheer yesterday when *El Gordo* (The Fat One), the Spanish national lottery, paid out its biggest ever first prize of £185 million to hundreds of customers of a lottery shop in a poor suburb of Palma, the island's capital .... **Page 1**

CHRIS HELGRAN

Children and parents besiege an Icelandic volunteer as she distributes Christmas presents in Sarajevo. Page 11

OPINION

God with us: The Love that came down at Christmas is indeed a love that demands no less than "my soul, my life, my all" .... **Page 17**

Signs of the times: Over our next 12 issues, we shall consider what the next year holds in store for famous and less-famous people born under each of the Zodiac's signs........................ **Page 17**

PAPERS

Queen Elizabeth II has settled for divorce to rid the House of Windsor of the bedevilling marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales. The British people may tire of the melodrama and decide to adopt a republican form of government. We would not bet on it — *New York Times*

COLUMNS

Magnus Linklater: Inflated expectations mean Christmas deflations. So what should we do?........................ **Page 16**

Simon Jenkins: One of our finest churches is to be found in Bristol, yet it is insulted by its setting and its neighbours .... **Page 16**

OBITUARIES

Sir Trenchard Cox, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1956-66; **Wing Commander Peter Swan**, pathfinder; **John Kirk**, Chief Economic Adviser, Ministry of Agriculture; **Francis Gysin**, documentary film maker..................... **Page 19**

LETTERS

Repairing the world; Europe; London's homeless .. **Page 17**

BUSINESS

Fraud: The use of international jurisdictions has led to a sharp increase in cases handled by the Serious Fraud Office .... **Page 23**

Bananas: A venture set up by Fyffes, the Irish fruit and vegetable supplier and a Windward Islands company paid £147.5 million for the Geest banana business ...... **Page 21**

Markets: The FT-SE 100 rose 25.0 to 3658.3. Sterling's index rose from 82.8 to 83.0 after a rise from $1.5391 to $1.5415 and from DM2.2168 to DM2.2202................ **Page 24**

ARTS

Mystery of the logs: So why did Good King Wenceslas *take all those logs to the peasant?* Richard Morrison on the world of carols .... **Page 13**

SPORT

Racing: The Derby will be brought forward to avoid the European football championship opening match, raising the question of a return to Wednesdays .... **Page 40**

Football: Manchester City have forced the Premiership to allow an unlimited number of European Union nationals .... **Page 40**

Cricket: Heavy rain caused England's game with South African Students XI to be abandoned .... **Page 37**

Rugby union: Club rugby returns with Bath entertaining Northampton in the Pilkington Cup .... **Page 36**

CAR '95

Sniffing out the facts of those car air fresheners: Lord Montagu on the Mini

SATURDAY TIMES

MAGAZINE

Christmas quiz: The ultimate seasonal challenge... **Page 18**

90 from the 90s: The best songs of the decade.. **Page 15**

Man with a mission: The Archbishop of Canterbury's message to Britain..... **Page 8**

Fast food: Tips for instant festive entertaining.. **Page 31**

WEEKEND

A farewell to farms: Paul Heiney gives up six inspiring, depressing, crushing and thrilling years............ **Page 1**

January sales: Best of the bargains.............. **Pages 6, 7**

Books: Christmas and New Year reading ..... **Pages 10, 11**

Travel: From Cornwall to Madagascar ...... **Pages 14-20**

10 15

The weekly magazine for young Times readers

Black Christmas: Blackadder and Baldrick's comic *Christmas Carol*.................. **Page 6**

Win: Boots, berets, skates, stereos in our Twelve Days of Christmas.................. **Page 3**

Recommended: best films, books and music...... **Page 10**

VISION

Your guide to Christmas television and radio

Cover story: the pick of all the festive films, among them *Gremlins 2*, appearing Friday, ITV, 9pm .... **Page 2**

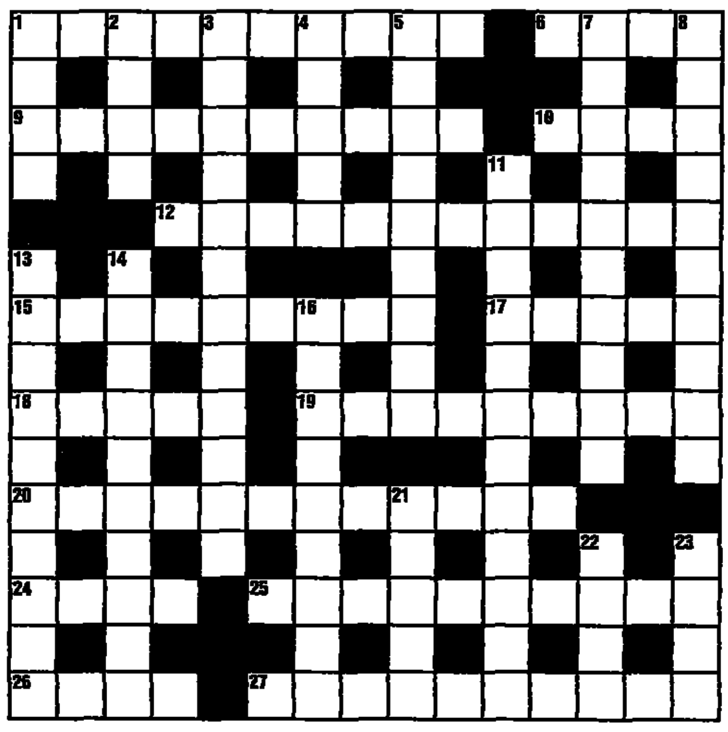
Family thriller: Wallace and Gromit make a return in *A Close Shave*, Christmas Eve, BBC2, 6.15pm

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,046

A bottle of Knockando, a superb Speyside Single Malt Scotch whisky uniquely bottled only when at its peak of perfection rather than at a pre-determined age, together with a fine leather credit card wallet, will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address ....

....



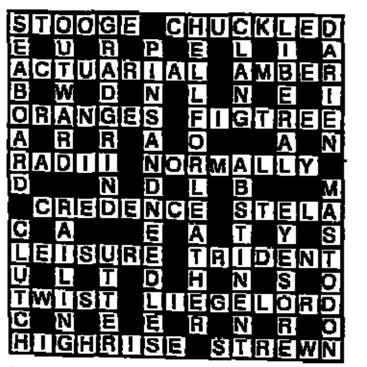
ACROSS

1 Let us get involved with a live broadcast — such an event? (10).
6 Some cash I posted in packet, say (4).
9 Details of contract that's inappropriate for best-seller (5,5).
10 Remarkable person's doubly deficient education (4).
12 Legal document has to be found about Lincoln College (6,6).
15 Tested about a litre from part of France (9).
17 Film star needs costume, having nothing on (5).
18 House party in reverse of usual behaviour (5).
19 Rested at home with disease that's making one unconscious (6,3).
20 The Tavern? Or the other place, possibly (5,2,5).
24 A source of notes of Bank of England, initially (4).
25 Taking a trip round any old part of Africa (10).
26 Monarch appearing to aggravate the church (4).
27 Outmoded division of capital between actress and composer (4,6).

DOWN

1 Mission one is reproachfully taken to (4).
2 Idle brain (4).
3 Hamlet's plot? (7,5).
4 Small stones last removed from riddle (5).
5 Uncle, presumably, is a fair target (4,5).
7 New pens in school getting the bird (3-7).
8 Harbour gates opening (10).
11 Double act making such a commotion! (4,3,5).
13 Inappropriately insert fowl (10).
14 Transform rough mood, putting you, say, in this? (4,6).
16 Not caring to construct protected area in nursery (4,5).
21 Nothing that's said implying an obligation (5).
22 *The King and I* — fifties hit (4).
23 Odd characters stopped from repairing net (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,040



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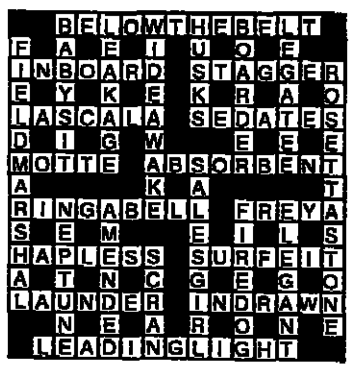

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: *P Bruxner, Maldstone, Kent; S Babbage, Cambridge; E Jackson, Wrexham, Clywd; E Gemmill, Glasgow; R Waplington, Richmond, Surrey.*

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TIMES WEATHERCALL

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Greater London	701
Kent,Surrey,Sussex	702
Dorset,Hants & IOW	703
Devon & Cornwall	704
Wilts,Gloucs,Avon,Soms	705
Berks,Bucks,Oxon	706
Beds,Herts & Essex	707
Norfolk,Suffolk,Cambs	708
West Mid & Sth Glam & Gwent	709
Shrops,Herefds & Worcs	710
Central Midlands	711
East Midlands	712
Lincs & Humberside	713
Dyfed & Powys	714
Gwynedd & Clwyd	715
N W England	716
W & S Yorks & Dales	717
N E England	718
Cumbria & Lake District	719
S W Scotland	720
W Central Scotland	721
Edin S Fife/Lothian & Borders	722
E Central Scotland	723
Grampian & E Highlands	724
N W Scotland	725
Caithness,Orkney & Shetland	726
N Ireland	727

Weathercall is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute at all other times

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic/roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the code.

London & SE traffic, roadworks	
Area within M25	731
Essex/Herts/Beds/Bucks/Berks/Oxon	732
Kent/Surrey/Sussex/Hants	734
M25 London Orbital only	736
National traffic and roadworks	
National motorways	737
West Country	738
Wales	739
Midlands	740
East Anglia	741
North-west England	742
North-east England	743
Scotland	744
Northern Ireland	745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute all other times

HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY

Sun rises: 8 05 am	Sun sets: 3.54 pm
Moon sets 6.11 pm	Moon rises 8 47 am

First quarter December 28

London 3.54 pm to 8 05 am
Bristol 4.04 pm to 8 14 am
Edinburgh 3 41 pm to 8 43 am
Manchester 3 52 pm to 8 24 am
Penzance 4 23 pm to 8 20 am

TOMORROW

Sun rises: 8 05 am	Sun sets: 3 55 pm
Moon sets 7.30 pm	Moon rises 9.30 am

First quarter December 28

London 3 55 pm to 8 05 am
Bristol 4 05 pm to 8 15 am
Edinburgh 3.41 pm to 8 44 am
Manchester 3 53 pm to 8.25 am
Penzance 4 23 pm to 8 20 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	2:07	7 35	2 30	7 53
Aberdeen	1.43	4 59	2:00	4 68
Avonmouth	7:44	14 11	8:11	13.98
Belfast	11 36	3 89	–	–
Cardiff	7.45	12.27	8:07	12.20
Devonport	6:21	5 78	6 51	5 60
Dover	11:27	6 98	11:54	7 00
Dublin	–	–	0:04	4 49
Falmouth	5:35	5.35	6:01	5.24
Glasgow	1 07	4 68	1.37	4 78
Harwich	0:05	4 10	0.31	4.23
Holyhead	10:47	6 07	11 18	5 85
Hull	6 47	7 73	7 03	7 87
Ilfracombe	6.27	8 97	6:52	9 87
King's Lynn	6 38	7 11	6:59	7 35
Leith	2:55	5.95	3:17	5.96
Liverpool	11:46	10 15	–	–
Lowestoft	10:02	2 62	10:15	2 74
Margate	0:17	4 87	0:45	4 98
Milford Haven	6 41	7 54	7:07	7 38
Newquay	5:32	7 16	5 56	7 10
Oban	6:13	4.28	6 27	4 11
Penzance	5:09	5 81	5:32	5 61
Portland	7:20	2 35	7:44	2.14
Portsmouth	11:54	5 02	–	–
Shoreham	11:48	6 66	–	–
Southampton	11:17	4 93	11 45	4 79
Swansea	6 52	9.98	7:17	9 87
Tees	4:09	5 65	4:24	5 75
W'ton-on-Nze	–	–	0:24	4 50

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HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Torquay, Devon, 14C (57F); lowest day max: Eskdalemuir, Dumfries & Galloway, 1C (34F); highest rainfall: Plymouth 1.5in; highest sunshine: Skegness, Lincolnshire, 1.7hr

FORECAST

☐ **General:** England and Wales will start showery in the south, but with more prolonged rain or sleet in the north. This rain will drift south during the day, to be followed by clearer and colder conditions, with wintry showers. Northern Ireland and southern Scotland, after early rain or sleet, will brighten with wintry showers. The rest of Scotland will be cold with snow showers in places.

☐ **London, E Anglia, Midlands, E, NW, Cent N England, N Wales:** rain or showers. Clearer weather arriving from the north late in day. Wind north to northwest, becoming northeast light to moderate. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **SE, Cent S, SW England, S Wales:** showers in morning, more prolonged rain later on. Wind northwest, becoming north to northeast light to moderate. Max 11C (52F).

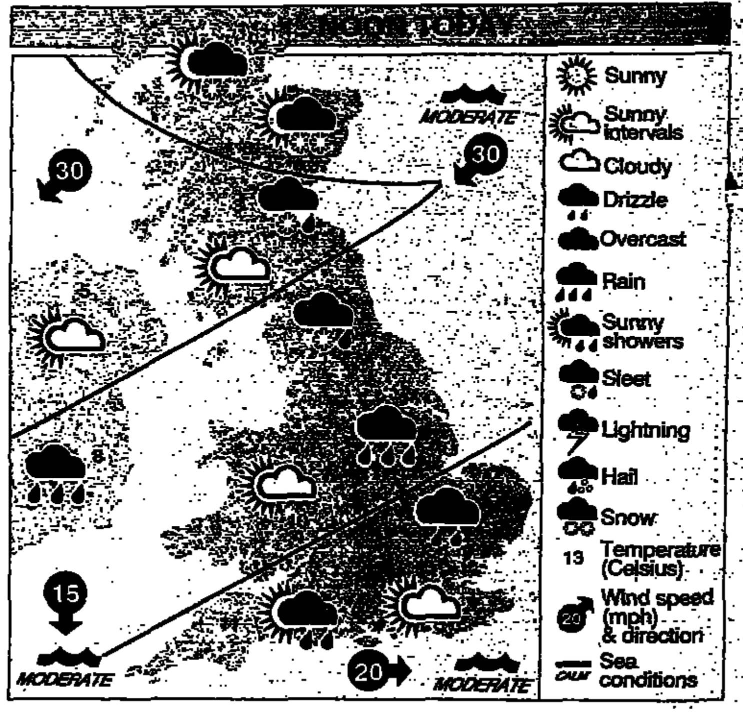
☐ **Channel Isles:** some brightness. Wind west fresh, becoming light to moderate. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **Lake District, Isle of Man, NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, N Ireland:** rain or sleet, snow on hills at first, clearer conditions with some showers spreading from the north. wind northeast fresh, becoming light to moderate. Max 5C (41F).

☐ **Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE, NW Scotland, Orkney:** showers, snow on high ground. Wind northeast fresh, becoming light to moderate. Max 3C (37F).

☐ **Shetland:** snow showers. Wind north, becoming northwest fresh to strong. Max 1C (34F).

☐ **Outlook for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day:** colder weather spreading to all districts, after rain, sleet or snow in parts of the south.



AROUND BRITAIN

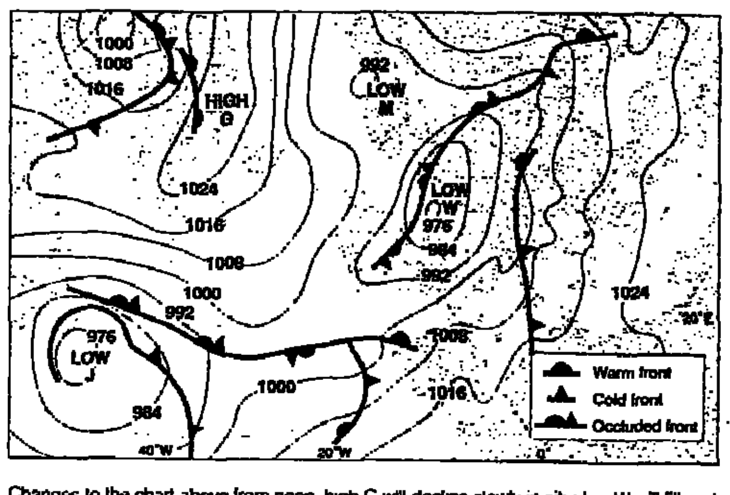
24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; sn=snow; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F			Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	-	1 01	4	39	r	Liverpool	-	0.65	9	48	r
Anglesey	0 2	0 57	11	52	r	London	0 6	0.39	13	55	c
Aspatria	-	0 61	4	39	r	Lowestoft	0 6	0 50	12	54	r
Aviemore	-	-	3	37	c	Manchester	-	0 61	9	48	r
Belfast	-	0 54	6	43	r	Margate	-	0 25	12	54	du
Birmingham	1 3	0 69	12	54	r	Minehead	1.0	0.82	13	55	sh
Bognor R	-	0 68	12	54	r	Morecambe	-	0 76	5	41	r
Bristol	0 4	0 62	13	55	r	Newcastle	-	1.17	6	43	r
Buxton	-	1 03	8	46	d	Norwich	0.4	0 54	13	55	r
Cardiff	0 1	0 65	11	52	sh	Oxford	0 9	0 67	13	55	r
Clacton	1 2	0.58	9	48	r	Penzance	-	0.89	13	55	r
Cleethorpes	X					Poole	-	0 86	13	55	sh
Colwyn Bay	0 5	0 39	12	54	sh	Prestatyn	-	0 41	10	50	sh
Cromer	-	0 53	12	54	r	Ross-o-wye	0 1	0.66	12	54	c
Eastbourne	-	0 42	12	54	r	Ryde	X				
Edinburgh	-	0 42	4	39	du	Salcombe	X				
Eskdalemuir	-	0 58	1	34	sn	Sandown	-	0 57	13	55	sh
Exmouth	0 1	0 91	12	54	r	Sauntn Snd	0 7	0 66	13	55	b
Falmouth	-	0 80	12	54	r	Scarboro'	-	0 81	7	45	r
Fishguard	-	0 72	11	52	r	Shanklin	-	1.00	12	54	r
Folkestone	-	0 45	11	52	c	Shrewsbury	0 3	0 51	9	48	r
Glasgow	-	0 33	4	39	r	Skegness	1 7	0 65	12	54	r
Guernsey	-	0 54	13	55	r	Southend	-	0 28	12	54	du
Hastings	-	0 50	11	52	c	Southport	-	0 74	8	46	r
Hayling I.	-	0 56	11	52	r	Southsea	-	0 56	12	54	r
Herne Bay	-	0 30	13	55	r	St. Ives	X				
Hove	-	0.20	11	52	r	Stornoway	-	0 01	6	43	r
Hunstanton	1 8	0 61	11	52	r	Swanage	-	0 63	12	54	r
Ilfracombe	-	X	12	54	du	Teignmouth	0 1	1 04	13	55	r
Isle of Man	-	0 50	7	45	d	Tenby	X				
Jersey	-	0 40	12	54	r	Tiree	-	0 65	6	43	r
Kinloss	-	0 19	3	37	sl	Torquay	0 1	0.91	14	57	sh
Leeds	-	1 06	6	43	r	Tynemouth	-	1 13	7	45	r
Lerwick	-	-	2	36	c	Ventnor	-	0 49	11	52	sh
Leuchars	-	0 72	4	39	r	West-s-mare	1 6	0 61	11	52	r
Littlehmptn	-	0 72	11	52	r	Weymouth	-	0.55	12	54	r

ABROAD

Ajaccio	15	59	c	Cologne	8	46	r	Madrid	13	55	r	Rome	15	59	f
Akrotiri	18	64	s	Corfu	14	57	s	Majorca	17	63	c	S Fr'isco	9	48	s
Alex'dria	20	68	f	C'phagn	-2	28	f	Malaga	17	63	f	S Paulo	28	82	c
Algiers	21	70	s	Dublin	8	46	fg	Malta	18	64	f	Salzburg	7	45	f
Amst'dm	9	48	r	Faro	18	64	r	Melb'rne	16	61	f	Santiago	31	88	s
Athens	15	59	f	Florence	11	52	c	Mexico C	19	66	f	Seoul	6	43	f
B Aires	29	84	f	Frankfurt	5	41	r	Miami	17	63	s	Sing'por	26	79	c
Bahrain	20	68	s	Funchal	21	70	s	Milan	7	45	d	St'kholm	-14	7	s
Bangkok	30	86	s	Geneva	11	52	f	Montreal	-10	14	sn	Strasb'rg	8	46	f
Barbados	28	82	f	Gibraltar	19	66	f	Moscow	-11	12	s	Sydney	17	63	c
Barcelona	14	57	f	Helsinki	-19	-2	s	Munich	8	46	f	Tangier	21	70	s
Beirut	18	64	s	Hong K	20	68	s	N Delhi	19	66	s	Tel Aviv	17	63	f
Belfast	6	43	r	Innsbrck	4	39	f	N York	0	32	s	Tenerife	23	73	s
Belgrade	5	41	f	Istanbul	6	43	s	Nairobi	25	77	f	Tokyo	11	52	s
Berlin	-2	28	r	Jeddah	27	81	f	Naples	17	63	f	Toronto	-5	23	f
Bermuda	16	61	f	Jo'burg	26	79	s	Nice	10	50	c	Tunis	19	66	s
Biarritz	17	63	c	Karachi	29	84	s	Oslo	-10	14	s	Valencia	18	64	s
Bordo'x	14	57	f	L Angels	14	57	s	Paris	11	52	c	Vanc'ver	6	43	f
Brussels	11	52	r	L Palmas	23	73	s	Peking	5	41	s	Venice	7	45	c
Budapst	-3	27	f	Le Tquet	11	52	f	Perth	27	81	f	Vienna	-2	28	c
Cairo	19	66	f	Lisbon	17	63	f	Prague	-2	28	c	Warsaw	-5	23	s
Cape Tn	28	82	s	Locarno	7	45	c	Reykjavik	-10	14	s	Wash'ton	2	36	f
Ch'church	19	66	-	Luxembg	7	45	r	Rio de J	29	84	f	Wel'ngton	25	77	s
Chicago	-1	30	f	Luxor	23	73	s	Riyadh	13	55	c	Zurich	6	43	c

Temperatures at midday local time. X = not available



Changes to the chart above from noon: high G will decline slowly in situ; low W will fill and drift E gradually, while low M becomes indistinct; low J will fill slowly, remaining stationary

PLEASE HELP A LITTLE DONKEY IN DISTRESS

These four donkeys were found starving and in the most appalling condition. They were infested with lice and their neglected, overgrown hooves made walking extremely difficult. They had been kept with horses and had suffered deep and painful bite wounds on their backs. Their fear of humans was so intense that one poor donkey threw himself on the ground, trembling with fright when first examined by the vet.

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PLEASE HELP US TO HELP THEM

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Tel: (01395) 578222
Enquiries to Dr E. D. Svendsen, M.B.E.

Reg Charity No. 264818

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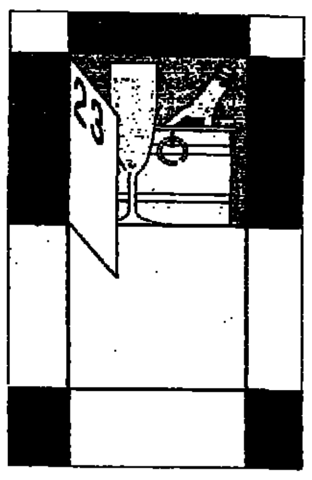
هكذا من الاصل

COMPETITIONS



Win 36 magnums of Moët & Chandon champagne

Page 21

PLUS: The Jumbo Crossword, page 20

SHOPPING

A guide to the best January sales

Pages 6, 7

PLUS: Sun creams for skiers, page 13

TRAVEL

Castaway returns to his Pacific island paradise

Page 16

PLUS: Simon Jenkins in India, page 14

PROPERTY

Where to buy a holiday home in the sun

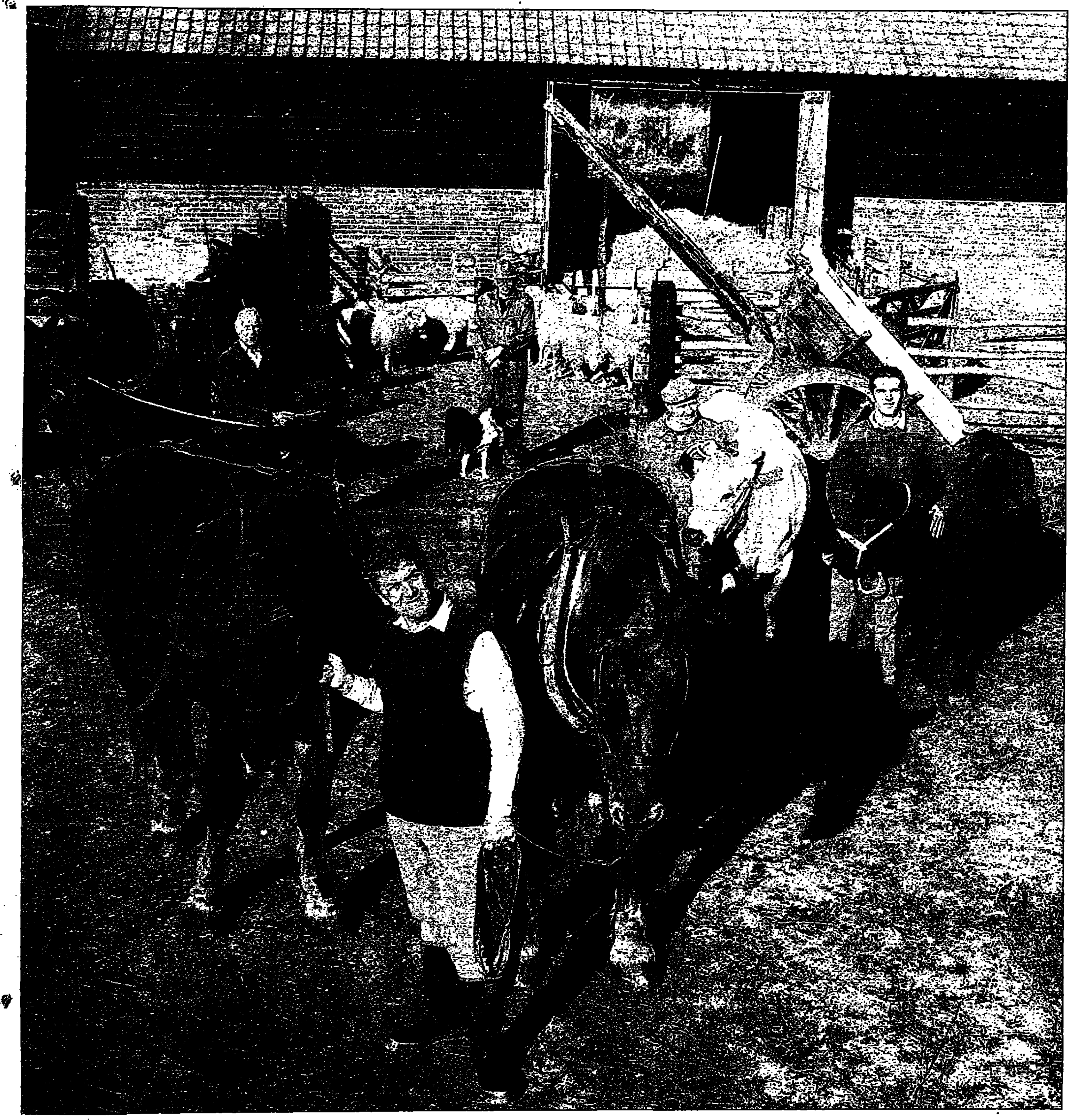
Page 8

PLUS: Splash out on fishing rights, page 9

WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 23 1995

PAUL HEINEY: A FAREWELL TO FARMS



Every picture tells a story, so what is the story behind this one? The true story, I mean.

Well, most of it you know already. For the past six years the weekly happenings on this small Suffolk farm have been paraded before you as a slurry opera: and now it is time to bring down the curtain on the show.

For much of the time it has been farce. occasionally tragicomedy; we have been laughed at when we were being deadly serious. taken seriously when all we wanted was to raise a smile. Perhaps panto sums it up better. "Behind you!" Yes, it's all behind us now.

So we thought we would come on stage. take a final bow, and thank you for being a wonderful audience. Of course, in setting up this photograph there were backstage tantrums. You are dealing with stars here. As it is, there is one notable absentee whose reason for not appearing we shall discover later.

But they were all difficult in one way or another. Sage, the British White cow, would appear only if she could be at the front of the picture but the photographer told her she was too brilliant to be in the foreground. Fortunately, she misunderstood his technical observation as flattery, and so graciously accepted a place on the second row. That was a close one.

Flash the sheepdog took some persuading too. You see, he's terrified of sheep. I am sorry if it embarrasses him but he would do anything to avoid confronting a ewe. If you don't believe me, look carefully and you will see he is on a lead. The sheep, having some care for his feelings, played the part of the chorus with decorum and kept more or less in the positions they were given. If they moved, they knew I would have to send Flash to sort them out and it would only end in tears. His tears.

The cart horses weren't easy either. I am holding Taffy and Blue. Blue came when we started to farm, has lived through all the hard bits, and so surely deserves top billing. Taffy, on the other hand, is a youngster still learning the game, but he and Blue are the principal working pair now. Which puts poor old Star on the back row, which he does not like. He was working before either of the ones up front were born, so why isn't he up front, like the veterans on D-Day being saluted and honoured? Where's the justice? I suppose because he is the most trustworthy. I didn't have to keep looking round for mischief.

Only the red cow, Bilberry, is without temperament. We have had good cows and bad cows, but she has been the best. We have had cows that charge through hedges like an army on manoeuvres: skittish, girly ones who thought it would be super fun to flatten a fence. Bilberry has never put a foot wrong. She is happy just to play a part, grateful to come on stage for the grand finale. Contentedly pregnant with her latest calf, she is the sort of cow who would share a dressing room with anyone, and make the cast a cup of tea after the show is over.

Which brings us to the supporting cast, the humans. In our long-running panto Dilly has been without doubt the conjurer. He has more tricks up his sleeve than a meeting of the Magic Circle. He has been the master of the mangel-topping knife, has amazed you with the deftness with which he has wielded his hoe. The swiftness of the hand deceives the eye. But do not let him start on his comedy

Continued on page 3, col 1

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CHOICE

Planning to see a show or a film, an exhibition or a concert? *The Times* critics select the best entertainment

RONALD COOPER

Mirror image: Lesley Garrett puts the finishing touches to her make-up for her part in the colourful romp *La Belle Vivette* at the Coliseum, directed by Ian Judge

OPERA

Rodney Milnes

AIDA: Casting international opera can be a bit of a hit-and-miss affair, but when it all comes right, as in the current Covent Garden revival of Verdi's exotic masterpiece, the rewards are worth waiting for. The high-octane combination of the double-creamy voiced Sharon Sweet, the mettlesome Nina Terentieva, the hypermusical Michael Sylvester and the towering Simon Estes makes for an evening of rare vocal splendour, and the seal is set by Daniele Gatti's authoritative, alert conducting. A succulent Christmas present for Verdians.
Royal Opera House, Bow St, London WC2 (0171-304 4000), Wed 27, 7.30pm. ♿

LA BELLE VIVETTE: It's perfectly safe to take Aunt Edna to the Coliseum's colourful Christmas show, a squeaky-clean romp deftly directed by Ian Judge with a script by Michael Frayn and music by Offenbach. Lesley Garrett and Neill Archer sing nicely as the romantic leads — Janis Kelly and Thomas Randle at the matinee — and there's energetic support from ENO regulars; keep an eye out for Rosemary Ashe, who reminds us that Offenbach was into something other than squeaky cleanliness. James Holmes is the expert conductor.
Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (0171-632 8300), today, 2.30pm and 7.30pm; Thurs 28, 7.30. ♿

MUSEUMS

John Russell-Taylor

THE CARRICK FAMILY IN RUSSIA: Scottish enterprise carried to many remote places during the 19th century; St Petersburg was by no means the most exotic. It was to Russia, though, that an Edinburgh photographer called William Carrick went in 1859, in the hope of making his fortune by opening what seems to have been the first photographic studio in the city. Though he really hankered to be a painter, he was successful and became an important founder of Russian photography. His family remained there through good times and bad, ending up in one of Stalin's labour camps. Their extraordinary story is documented with many examples of William's work, often of characters that one would swear had stepped straight out of Gogol. There are also paintings and other documents to bring the background vividly to life.
Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1 Queen Street, Edinburgh (0131-332 2266)
Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2-5pm, until Jan 21; closed Dec 25, 26, Jan 1.

NOT ONE PICTURE SHALL LEAVE THIS ISLAND: The history of the National Gallery during the Second World War seems to have been extraordinarily well organised for a nation which tends to pride itself on muddling through somehow. All the pictures were evacuated to a Welsh slate mine before war was declared and the gallery closed. Soon, however, the idea of lunchtime concerts was launched, and early in 1942 the pattern of showing just one Painting of the Month was instituted, notching up amazing attendance figures for exhibits such as the *Rokeby Venus* and Botticelli's *Mars and Venus*. There were also shows of contemporary art, especially Official War Artists, and a canteen was opened for the first time in the sacred precincts. The gallery was up and running again, with the first selection of returned pictures, within nine days of Germany's surrender. All this is absorbingly documented in a show of posters, photographs, cuttings, letters and film of what was happening while it happened.
The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London WC2 (0171-839 3321), Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm, until Feb 11; closed Dec 24-26.

GALLERIES

Richard Corke

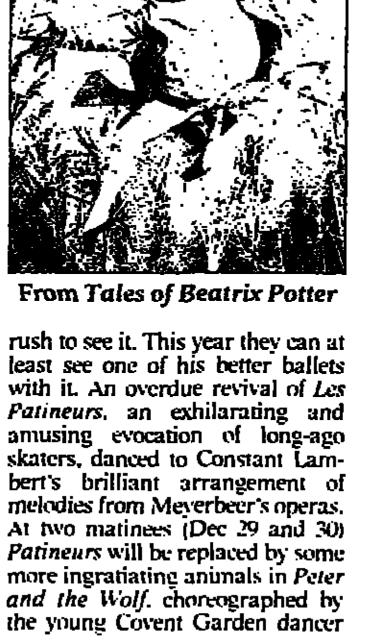
WILLIAM TURNBULL: As a rebellious young man in the early 1950s, Turnbull was part of a generation who transformed post-war British sculpture. But his impressive retrospective show at the Serpentine Gallery is notable for its tranquillity. Whether the bronzes date from the 1950s or from more recent years, they exude a sense of stillness. Turnbull is obsessed with the notion of a primordial past. His subjects range from horses to women, and he transforms them into images that seem to reach back to the origins of sculpture. The power of his work is enhanced by the lucidity of its installation at the gallery. This is an exceptionally well-displayed exhibition, and Turnbull's sculpture combines with his abstract paintings to enlarge the reputation of an austere yet sensuous artist.
Serpentine Gallery, *Kensington Gardens, W2 (0171-402 6075) until Jan 7.*

JOHN DAVIES: A far younger sculptor than Turnbull, Davies has nevertheless produced a substantial body of work over the past 25 years. His sculpture and drawings form the first exhibition in an exciting new space for temporary shows: the spectacular Mezzanine Court at Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery. Designed by architect Peter Ahrends, the Court has been created by stretching a roof over a light-well at the heart of the gallery. It gives a sense of drama to Davies's work. Some of his colossal heads and figures are utterly impassive. They suggest a debt to Egyptian carvings, but elsewhere smaller figures show greater energy. A former student at Manchester College of Art, Davies is an appropriate artist to inaugurate a splendid addition to the city's range of showcases.
Whitworth Art Gallery, *Oxford Rd, Manchester (0161-275 7450) until Feb 17.*

DANCE

John Percival

TALES OF BEATRIX POTTER: Frederick Ashton made his ballet about Miss Potter's little furry creatures for a film and he resolutely refused to have it transferred to the stage for fear people would think he had lost his marbles. That has not stopped the Royal Ballet from inflicting this indignity on him posthumously, and crowds rush to see it. This year they can at least see one of his better ballets with it. An overdue revival of *Les Patineurs*, an exhilarating and amusing evocation of long-ago skaters, danced to Constant Lambert's brilliant arrangement of melodies from Meyerbeer's operas. At two matinees (Dec 29 and 30) *Patineurs* will be replaced by some more ingratiating animals in *Peter and the Wolf*, choreographed by the young Covent Garden dancer Matthew Hart (but you might do better to visit London City Ballet giving Hart's production of Cinderella at Sadler's Wells — 0171-713 6000 — until January 6).
Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, WC2 (0171-304 4000) today 1pm, 6pm; Thurs, Fri 2pm, 7pm; December 30 at 12 noon; Jan 1, 5, 6 at 7.30pm.


From *Tales of Beatrix Potter*

THE NUTCRACKER: English National Ballet's popular production by Ben Stevenson is back at the Royal Festival Hall (0171-960 4242) until January 6, but those who prefer their dancers with skates on can see a version on ice in arenas around the country this week and next. Olympic gold medallists Oksana Baiul and Viktor Petrenko star with British National champion Steven Cousins.
Nynex Arena Manchester, (0161-930 8000), Wed 7.30pm; **NEC Arena, Birmingham**, (0121-767 4040), Thurs 2.30pm, 7.30pm; **Newcastle Arena** (0191-401 8000), Fri, next Sat 2.30pm, 7.30pm; **Sheffield Arena** (0114-256 5656), January 2, 3 at 7.30pm; **London Arena** (0171-538 1212), January 5, 6 at 7.30pm.

ROCK

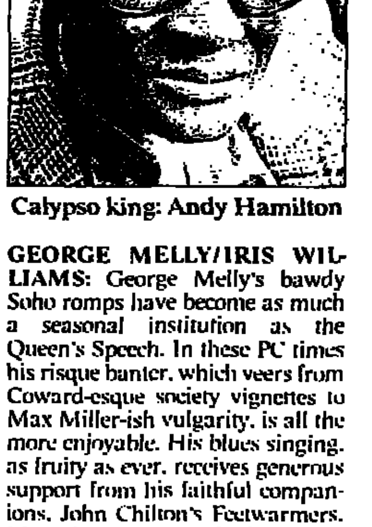
David Sinclair

THE STONE ROSES: Reviews of their shows have been mixed, and too many weaknesses in the group's structure have been exposed for them ever to recapture their original state of grace. But although John Squire is on a bit of a retro jag, and Ian Brown is a useless singer, they continue to inspire a morbid fascination among fans and detractors alike. Curiosity will be intensified for their final Wembley show when the support group will be the Manic Street Preachers, playing their first gig since the disappearance of guitarist Richey James.
Manchester Apollo (0161-242 2560), Dec 23; **Sheffield Arena** (with Black Grape) (0114-256 5656), Dec 28; **Wembley Arena** (with Manic Street Preachers) (0181-900 1234), Dec 29.

THERAPY?/ASH/JOYRIDER: An impressive Irish three-hander which finds Belfast heavyweights Therapy? joined by their Portadown protégé Joyrider, and up-and-coming punk-pop trio Ash from Co Down. Therapy?'s fourth album, *Infernal Love*, did well across Europe but failed to click in Britain. They're off to try their luck in America in the New Year. Joyrider are on the verge of converting a local following into something more substantial, but younger rivals Ash have had the more exciting year, receiving their A-level results weeks before *Girl From Mars* became the first of two Top 20 UK hits for them.
Point, Dublin (003531 836 3633), Dec 28; Ulster Hall, Belfast (01232 329685), Dec 30.

JAZZ

Clive Davis


Calypso king: Andy Hamilton

GEORGE MELLY/IRIS WILLIAMS: George Melly's bawdy Soho romps have become as much a seasonal institution as the Queen's Speech. In these PC times his risque banter, which veers from Coward-esque society vignettes to Max Miller-ish vulgarity, is all the more enjoyable. His blues singing, as fruity as ever, receives generous support from his faithful companions, John Chilton's Feetwarmers. More decorous material is on offer at the Cafe Royal as the Welsh balladeer Iris Williams begins her residency. Barbara Cook follows her into the Green Room next month.
Melly — **Ronnie Scott's**, Frith St, London W1 (0171-439 0747). Tonight to Sat Jan 6, from 9.30pm.
Williams — **Cafe Royal**, Regent St, Piccadilly, London W1 (0171-437 9090), Wed 27 to Sat Jan 13, excluding Mons & Suns.

JAZZ JAMAICA/ANDY HAMILTON: Caribbean syncopations form the dominant theme this week at the major new London venue The Rhythmic. Jazz Jamaica, an effervescent band featuring the ex-Jazz Warriors vocalist Cleveland Watkiss, puts its danceable spin on the standard repertoire. Tenor saxophonist Andy Hamilton, a veteran of the Jamaican popular music scene, has been enjoying a revival with his freewheeling calypsos. Mick Hucknall, David Murray and Andy Sheppard all turned out to support him on his belated debut album, *Silvershine*.
The Rhythmic, Chapel Market, London N1 (0171-713 5859) Jazz Jamaica, Thur 28; Hamilton, Sat 30

FILM

Geoff Brown

BABE (U): The best family film in a long age, starring a lovable piglet who develops a knack of herding sheep by politely asking them to move. The animals are real, with a few animatronic ones mixed in, and have the power of speech. This may sound a recipe for disaster, but this Australian adaptation of Dick King-Smith's book *The Sheep-Pig* never puts a trotter wrong. Sentiment is balanced by self-mockery; the humour is fresh and intelligent; and director Chris Noonan serves up a wide range of visual treats.
Barbican ♿ closed Sun (0171-638 8891) **Clapham Picture**, closed Sun (0171-498 3323) **Empire** ♿ (0171-437 1234) **MGMs: Baker Street** (0171-935 9772) **Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Trocadero** ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Odeon Swiss Cottage** (01426 914 098) **Plaza**, closed Sun (0171-437 1234) **Rio** (0171-254 6677) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

THE INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD (PG): Endearing Hollywood adaptation of Lynne Reid Banks's stories about a magic cupboard that brings toys to life. Toys like Little Bear, a three-inch wooden American Indian. Hal Scardino steers clear of all cuteness as the earnest, lonely child, and rap artist Litefoot cuts a striking figure as the Iroquois warrior. Their adventures together lack the knockabout frenzy of most family films.
Clapham Picture, closed Sun (0171-498 3323) **MGM Chelsea** (0171-352 5096) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **West End** (01426-915 574)

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

COMPANY: If marriage really means hitching yourself to "someone to need you too much, someone to know you too well, someone to pull you up short, to put you through hell" — well, why sacrifice your freedom? That is the question preoccupying the flummoxed protagonist of Stephen Sondheim's wry, dry, boldly scored, brilliantly written musical. Sam Mendes's deft, intimate revival concentrates less than the original West End production on the emotional destruction wreaked by sophisticated New York, more on the ambivalent feelings of a 35-year-old whose married friends contrive to put him off wedlock.
Donmar, Earlham Street, WC2 (0171-369 1732). Mon to Sat 7.30pm, Wed, Sat 3pm. Closed Dec 25.

ACCORDING TO HOYLE: Patrick Marber's *Dealer's Choice* may have left London, but here is an equally lively play about the personal confusions of a poker school. This time the author, William Gaminara, is preoccupied with deception. Caddish Clive suspects that coarse Eddie has bedded his wife, and cool Chris must hide the fact that it's Clive's daughter that Eddie has seduced. With suicide also in the air, the comedy does not lack its dark, harsh aspects; but the laughter is unceasing.
Hampstead Theatre, Swiss Cottage, NW3 (0171-722 9301). Mon to Sat 8pm, matinees Sat and Tues, 4pm. Closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

CLASSICAL

Richard Morrison

FOURS OF DESTINY: We live in a golden age of string quartets. Another one, the Wihan Quartet from Prague, was discovered in 1991, when it carried off every prize in the London String Quartet Competition with performances of startling intensity. Have they mellowed or become even fiercer? All will be revealed in this Schubert, Mozart and Dvořák recital on Thursday. In the same hall on Friday there is a tribute from one fine pianist to an even greater one. Gerhard Oppitz plays a *Homage to Wilhelm Kempff* that includes Kempff's Bach arrangements.
Wigmore Hall, Wigmore St, London W1 (0171-935 2141), Thurs, Fri 7.30pm.

TEDDY BEARS CONCERT: There are many ways of introducing children to music but only the ebullient promoter Raymond Gubbay offers £1 reductions to patrons who bring a teddy bear to this annual event. I am a Barbie-doll man myself, but I dare say that a search of the kids' bedrooms will turn up the requisite furry friend, along with heaven knows what else. The music ranges from the inevitable *Teddy Bears' Picnic* to *Thunderbirds are Go*. Irresistible. No, really.
Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2 (0171-638 8891), Wed, 3pm.

WEST END THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London
■ House full, returns only ◪ Some seats available ☐ Seats at all prices

■ A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Revival of Ian Judge's popular but over-sweet production. Clive Francis plays Scrooge
Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-638 8891) Mon-Sat, 7.15pm: most mats sold out. Until Jan 13 ♿

☐ DEAD FUNNY: Belinda Lang, Kevin McNally and Sam Kelly in Terry Johnson's sharply funny play about comics and some of their fans
Savoy, The Strand, WC2 (0171-836 8888) Mon-Fri 8pm, Sat, 8.15pm; mats Wed, 2.30pm and Sat 5pm ♿

◪ DINNER WITH THE BORGIAS: High jinks and dirty deeds at the papal court. Good-natured fun but disappointingly lightweight.
Warehouse, Dingwall Road, East Croydon (0181-680 4060) Tue, 6.30pm; Wed-Sat, 8pm, Sun, 5pm

☐ DRACULA: Christmas return for Phil Willmott's ingenious adaptation of the vampire classic: decadent, erotic, scary. Late night start designed to screw up the tension by midnight
BAC, Main House, Lavender Hill, Battersea, SW11 (0171-223 2223). Tue-Sat, 10pm, Sun, 8pm ♿

☐ FUNNY MONEY: Ray Cooney plays the man who finds a bag of bank-notes in his latest farce; Charlie Drake excellent as a sorely-tried taxi-driver
Playhouse, Northumberland Avenue, WC2 (0171-839 4401) Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Thurs, 3pm and Sat, 5pm ♿

☐ THE GLASS MENAGERIE: Sam Mendes' radiant production. Zoe Wanamaker and Claire Skinner play mother and daughter; Ben Walden is Tom
Comedy, Panton Street, SW1 (0171-369 1731) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Sat, plus Dec 28 and Jan 4, 3pm

☐ HYSTERIA: Henry Goodman plays Freud, with Tim Potter as Salvador Dali, in Terry Johnson's surreal double award-winner. The funniest serious play in London
Duke of Yorks, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-836 5122) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm mats Thurs and Sat, 3pm ♿

◪ AN INSPECTOR CALLS: Stephen Daldry's powerful production, with Nicholas Woodeson as the all-knowing Inspector, and Edward Peel and Susan Engel as the pillars of society
Garrick, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-494 5085) Mon-Fri, 7.45pm, Sat, 8.15pm, mats Wed 2.30pm, Sat, 5pm

◪ THE JUNGLE BOOK: Tim Supple's vigorous, utterly enjoyable adaptation of three Mowgli stories. A refreshing relief from Disney cuteness.
Young Vic, The Cut, SE1 (0171-928 6363) Today 2.30 and 7pm ♿

The Tower: over the top, but well worth a visit

☐ MACK AND MABEL: Jerry Herman's musical set in early Hollywood. Fine songs, though a troublesome book. Starring Howard McGillin and a delightful Caroline O'Connor
Piccadilly, Denman Street, W1 (0171-369 1734) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mats Wed and Sat, 3pm

☐ THE MASTER BUILDER: Peter Hall's sexually understated production. Alan Bates the smouldering hero, fine performances by Gemma Jones and newcomer Victoria Hamilton
Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (0171-930 8800), Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mats Wed and Sat, 3pm ♿

PRIVATES ON PARADE: Tony Slattery plays the irrepressibly camp entertainer in Peter Nichols's comedy with music, set at an Army Camp Party in Malaya in 1948. Paul Clayton directs
Greenwich, Crooms Hill, SE10 (0181-858 7755) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mat Sat, 2.30pm. No perf today

☐ RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET: A marvellously mad mix of *The Tempest* with *Great Balls of Fire* and other cosmic hits of the 1950s and 1960s
Shaftesbury, Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2 (0171-379 5399), Mon-Thurs, 8pm, Fri and Sat, 5pm and 8.30pm. Also Dec 27, 2.30pm

☐ RUPERT STREET LONELY HEARTS CLUB: English Touring Theatre's production of Jonathan Harvey's thoughtful and passionate play set in an Easy London bedsit where most of the characters have love troubles
Criterion, Piccadilly Circus, W1 (0171-839 4488) Tue-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 7pm, mats Sat, 4pm and Sun, 3pm

◪ THE SHAKESPEARE REVUE: A witty evening of song, dance and sketches to do with William S. Assembled by Christopher Luscombe, Malcolm McKee.
Vaudeville, Strand, WC2 (0171-836 9987) Mon-Fri 8pm, Sat, 8.30pm, mats Wed 2.30pm and Sat 5.30pm

◪ THE SIMPLETON OF THE UNEXPECTED ISLES: Sam Walters's lucid production of Shaw's fantasy, written in 1935 and, incredibly, arguing in favour of selective human extermination
Orange Tree, Clarence Street, Richmond (0181-940 3633) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mats Dec 28, Jan 4 and 11 2.30pm, Sat, 4pm ♿

◪ SOUTH PACIFIC: Ruth Soubyu plays Bloody Mary in Phil Willmott's strong and winning production of the Rodgers & Hammerstein tropical evergreen
Drill Hall, Chenies Street, WC1 (0171-637 8270) Tue-Sat, and Jan 7 and 14, 7.30pm. No perf Dec 26 ♿

TALES FROM HOME: The Besht Tellers return, along with the Jewish tales they tell so well: their new repertoire includes legends from Iceland, Africa and the Caribbean
Tricycle, Kilburn High Road, NW6 (0171-328 1000) Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat Wed 2pm and Sat, 4pm. No perf today ♿

☐ THE TOWER: Alexandre Dumas' high romantic melodrama goes way over the top for most modern tastes but is worth a visit nonetheless. Sinead Cusack plays the sex-mad and murderous queen
Almeida, Almeida Street, N1 (0171-359 4404), Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat Sat, 2.30pm ♿

☐ TRAINSPOTTING: Irving Welsh's blackest of black comedies, set on the wild side of Edinburgh: drugs, danger and vomit. Limited London season after record-breaking tour
Ambassadors, West Street, WC2 (0171-836 6111) Mon-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 8.30pm; mats Wed and Sat, 5pm

◪ THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS: Jeremy Sinden plays the ebullient Toad in the now annual return of the National Theatre production. Less amazing stage effects here but still delightful
Old Vic, Waterloo Road, SE1 (0171-928 6655) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mats Wed, Sat, daily in week of Dec 26, 2.30pm ♿

LONG RUNNERS

☐ **Blood Brothers** Phoenix (0171-867 1044) ☐ **Buddy** Strand (0171-930 8800) ◪ **Communicating Doors** Gielgud (0171-494 5630) ☐ **Crazy for You** Prince Edward (0171-734 8951) ☐ **Dead Guilty**, Apollo (0171-494 5070) ☐ **Five Guys Named Moe** Albery (0171-369 1730) ◪ **Grease** Dominion (0171-416 6060) ◪ **Indian Ink** Aldwych (0171-416 6003) ■ **Miss Saigon** Drury Lane (0171-494 5400) ◪ **Starlight Express** Apollo Victoria (0171-828 8665) ■ **Sunset Boulevard** Adelphi (0171-344 0055) ☐ **The Woman in Black** Fortune (0171-836 2238)

Ticket information supplied by Society of London Theatre. **Availability at time of going to press: check box office.**

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol ◆) on release across the country

NEW RELEASES

◆ THE INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD (PG) See Critics' Choice, above

CURRENT

◆ THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT (15) What happens when the widowed President gets a girlfriend? Not much, even with Michael Douglas and Annette Bening. Director, Rob Reiner
Empire (0171-437 1234) **MGMs: Fulham Road** ♿ (0171-370 2636) **Trocadero** ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Odeon Kensington** (01426 914666) **Screen/Baker St**, closed Sun (0171-935 2772) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

ANGELS AND INSECTS (18) Procreative games in Victorian England. Handsome but stiff drama, with Mark Rylance, Patsy Kensit and Kristin Scott Thomas. Director, Philip Haas
Curzon Mayfair, closed Sun (0171-369 1720) **MGM Fulham Road** (0171-370 2636) **Odeon Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **Richmond**, closed Sun (0181-332 0030)

◆ BABE (U) See Critics' Choice, above

LA BELLE ET LA BETE (PG) Revival of Cocteau's enchanting version of *Beauty and the Beast*, with Jean Marais and Josette Day
Everyman ♿ (0171-435 1525) **NFT** (0171-928 3232) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121)

◆ CRIMSON TIDE (15) Antique heroes in a nuclear submarine, with Gene Hackman and Denzel Washington. Director, Tony Scott
MGMs: Chelsea (0171-352 5096) **Haymarket** (0171-839 1527) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Mezzanine** ♿ (01426 915683) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

DR JEKYLL AND MS HYDE (12) Brash and unfunny comic update of Stevenson's story, with Tim Daly and Sean Young. Director, David Price
Warner ♿ (0171-437 4343)

ELISA (15) Overwrought French tale of a tearaway kid who seeks out her father. With Vanessa Paradis, Gerard Depardieu. Director, Jean Becker
MGM Swiss Centre (0171-439 4470)

FARINELLI (15) The life of an 18th century castrato. Lots of opera, sex and clothes, but Gerard Corbiau's film only scratches the material's potential
MGMs: Swiss Centre (0171-439 4470) **Tottenham Court Road** (0171-636 6148) **Minema** (0171-235 4225) **Odeon Kensington** (01426 914666)

◆ GOLDENEYE (12) Pierce Brosnan twinkles as the new James Bond. A rip-roaring thriller with a sense of humour, with Sean Bean. Director, Martin Campbell
Barbican ♿ closed Sun (0171-638 8891) **MGMs: Baker St** (0171-935 9772) **Chelsea** (0171-352 5096) **Fulham Rd** (0171-370 2636) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Leicester Sq** (01426 915683) **Marble Arch** (01426 914501) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

LA HAINE (15) Powerful, angry drama about volatile youths on a Paris housing estate. Director, Mathieu Kassovitz
Clapham Picture House, closed Sun (0171-498 3323) **MGMs: Chelsea** until today (0171-352 5096) **Shaftesbury Ave** (0171-836 6279) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121) **Screen/Hill** ♿ (0171-435 3366)

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER (15) Actors struggle to mount *Hamlet*. Over-manic comedy from Kenneth Branagh, with Michael Maloney, Joan Collins
Barbican ♿ closed Sun (0171-638 8891) **MGM Tottenham Court Road** (0171-636 6148) **Odeons: Haymarket** (01426 915353) **Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121)

LAND AND FREEDOM (15): Ken Loach's powerful Spanish Civil War drama, with Ian Hart, Rosana Pastor
Curzon Phoenix, closed Sun (0171-369 1721) **Renoir**, closed Sun (0171-837 8402)

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE (U) John Ford's wonderful 1946 western about Wyatt Earp, with Henry Fonda, Linda Darnell and Victor Mature
Renoir, closed Sun (0171-837 8402)

◆ MURDER IN THE FIRST (15) Flashy but absorbing Alcatraz drama, with Kevin Bacon, Christian Slater and Gary Oldman. Director, Marc Rocco.
MGMs: Fulham Road (0171-370 2636) **Haymarket** (0171-839 1527) **Odeon Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

◆ POCAHONTAS (U): Strangely dull slice of American history, a backward step for Disney cartoons after *Aladdin* and *The Lion King*
Barbican ♿, closed Sun (0171-638 8891) **MGM Chelsea** (0171-352 5096) **NFT** (0171-928 3232) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **Phoenix** (0181-883 2233) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

Josette Day in a scene from *La Belle et La Bete*

◆ THE SANTA CLAUSE (U): Divorced dad becomes the new Santa. Broad family comedy with a human face, featuring Tim Allen. Director, John Pasquin
MGM Chelsea (0171-352 5096) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Swiss Cottage** (01426 914098) **West End** (01426 915574) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

SISTER MY SISTER (15) Nancy Meckler's modest chamber piece about a stifling French household. With Joely Richardson, Jodhi May and Julie Walters.
MGM Piccadilly (0171-437 3561)

◆ THE SWAN PRINCESS (U): Wizard threatens wedding of Prince Derek and Princess Odette. Bland animated fairy tale. Director, Richard Rich
MGM Trocadero ♿ (0171-434 0031) **UCI Whiteleys** ♿ (0171-792 3332)

◆ THE TIE THAT BINDS (18): Nasty thriller about child adoption, with Keith Carradine and Daryl Hannah.
MGM Trocadero ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Plaza**, closed Sun (0171-437 1234) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

◆ THREE WISHES (PG): Hobo spreads wisdom in the American suburbs. Dawdling romantic fantasy directed by Martha Coolidge, with Patrick Swayze and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio
MGM Trocadero ♿ (0171-434 0031) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

◆ TO DIE FOR (15): Delicious social satire about a television weather girl's murderous lust for glory. Gus Van Sant directs Nicole Kidman and Matt Dillon
MGM Haymarket (0171-839 1527) **Odeons: Kensington** (01426 914666) **Mezzanine** ♿ (01426 915683) **Warner** ♿ (0171-437 4343)

UNSTRUNG HEROES (PG): Diane Keaton directs this eccentric heart-warmer about a boy's charmed life with crazy relatives. With Nathan Watt, Andie MacDowell, John Turturro.
MGM Tottenham Court Road (0171-636 6148) **Notting Hill Coronet** ♿ (0171-727 6705) **Ritzy** (0171-737 2121) **Screen/Hill** ♿ (0171-435 3366)

A WALK IN THE CLOUDS (PG): Vacuous 1940s romance with Keanu Reeves as a returning soldier who finds a new life in California's vineyards. Director, Alfonso Arau
Odeon Mezzanine ♿ (01426 915683)

هكذا من الأصل

INSIDE STORY

'Alice may have to be written into the sale'

Continued from page 1

routine. He has only one joke, which starts "We only ever used to grow four mangels . . ." and when you look at him, puzzled, he goes on, ". . . one in each corner of the field and we rolled 'em home!" Yes, you've heard it before, and so have we. He can stick to magic.

Then comes young Robert White. What a star he has been, performing like a cross between an acrobat and a commando as he showed us his piglet-catching routine. Torvill and Dean could learn a thing or two about balance by watching this lad move in pursuit of an uncooperative hog. Blending the determination of the SAS with the ruggedness of a rugby prop forward, he always got his pig.

Then there is Derek, the horseman who gave up the land nearly forty years ago when the farm on which he worked replaced the cart-horses with tractors. With us, he has managed to fill a gap in his life. He too is a bit of a magician. I remember the day he drove the seed drill across the field for the first time in over thirty years. He had not spoken a word of command to a horse in all that time, but they obeyed, walked straight, and the sprouting corn eventually showed that the lines in which the drill had been driven were as precise as if drawn with a pencil on a map. In our show he is the mind-reader: the thoughts of the horses are no secret to him. You would rise to your feet to applaud if you could see Derek and the horses, telepathically in action.

Then comes Richard White, Farmer White as he has been billed. Mostly a backroom boy, he has been our stage manager and propped us up when the scenery looked set to fall upon us, or our inexperienced feet blundered down some unsuspected trapdoor. He marked our entrances and exits and, when things went wrong, he helped with the improvisation. Another star, in his way.

But now the show is over. "Oh, No It Isn't" some of you have cried out, but oh, yes it is; for sure. It has been exhilarating, inspiring, depressing, crushing, wearing, thrilling and overwhelming, sometimes all at once. It is time to take a long, exhausted breath.

And what will become of the cast? I am pleased to announce that they have all found good homes in which their individual shows can go on. As I have said before, the cart-horses stay with us wherever we go. Bilberry, the red cow, is going to a farm down the lane which has not had Red Poll cows since an award-winning herd was dispersed in the 1940s. She has pioneering work to do, founding a new dynasty.

Final curtain: Paul Heiney, second from right, with, from left, Richard White, Robert White and Derek Filby. Below: taking a bow, Taffy, Blue and Star

As for the sheep, for no reason I can think of, Farmer White wants them. To my shame I have taken money off him for them. The way I have often felt, I should be paying him to take them away. To ease my conscience I have thrown in the elderly sheep dog as part of the package. Working dogs need to be kept working and, although in Flash's case it is difficult to be certain whether he would be happier with his sheep than without them, on balance I decided he must stay with the flock. He will probably hate me for it, but I am reliably informed by those who care for the aged that a challenge staves off senility.

Sage the cow has done best for herself. She has been sold to neighbours, a young chap and his wife well used to keeping livestock. You'll never guess what he does for a living: he recycles waste from chocolate factories into animal feed! True. Sage has found this out and her bags have been packed for weeks. This cow imagines herself sitting under the shade of a tree, decadently scoffing a misshapen Turkish Delight, or incestuously licking a reject bar of Dairy Milk.

Which leaves me the only one with an undecided future. We had expected to be leaving here, turning our back on the theatre once the show had closed. But the chap who turned up in August full of ideas and enthusiasm for a life on the land has quietly faded away. I cannot say I blame him. Forgive me for being less than modest for a moment, but having a farm of your own, getting your hands dirty and your back bent, calls for a fair amount of courage and determination. If you are lacking in either you had better not start. It was as well he realised before it was too late.

But if your mind is set on the land, I would not try and talk you out of it. You'll have to take all the jokes about the "good life": the sneers of some farmers who will resent the pleasure they see you getting from it. Aching and nervous, broke and sleepless, you will have to put up with the weekend visitors cooing sentimentally at your "idyllic" life.

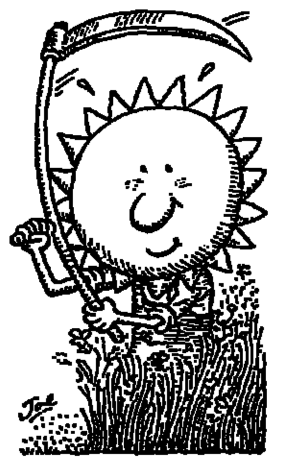
But you will emerge from it a broader individual, having come as close to the forces of nature as it is possible to be in these cocooned closing years of 20th-century Britain. Nor does it do anyone any harm to have to face up to the cruel facts of farming life: the death of much-loved animals, the reassurance that comes from the birth of new ones. Oh yes, I am a wiser individual for my time on the land. My family probably learnt a thing or two as well, but I have not dared to ask them exactly what.

But let us not get maudlin, nor shed any tears at Christmas time. Let us just raise a glass to six glorious years and be thankful we have been delivered safely through it. However, I must report one black cloud on the horizon. You may have noticed the missing individual in our picture: Alice the Large Black Pig. She was the first farm animal we had, and has made her mind up that she is going to be the last. I have given her fair warning that a move was on the cards, but she takes no notice. Now that it looks as though we may be here a little longer here than we thought, she has a broad grin on her face. She likes that orchard: I have a terrible feeling that we will have to write custody of her, in perpetuity, into our eventual sale documents. So the show is not over until the fat lady sings. Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Cover image and photographs on this page by JACK DANIELS
Cartoons by JOE WRIGHT

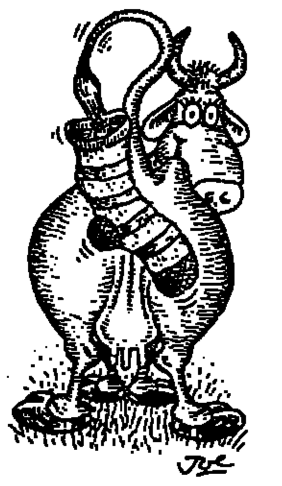
Highlights from Farmer's Diary

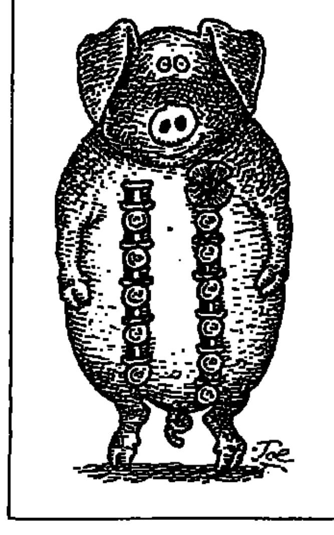
"I shall throttle the next person who says: 'Remember, make hay while the sun shines.' I am only too well aware that we had the hottest April and May since the earth was a molten inferno, and I admit that I recklessly wasted this blistering interlude in parading around county shows . . ."
July 7, 1990



"The Christmas spirit briefly wafted over me. Even when the soloist rose to sing the *Boar's Head Carol* I didn't allow the thought of a freezer full of unsold pork joints to disturb me. Then we sang *While Shepherds Watched*, and I remembered the flat battery on the electric fence."
December 22, 1990

"I thought to myself as I looked at the cows: I have an orphaned, one-eyed jail-breaker, an aunt of dubious sanity and a useless, smug, fat maiden. There may be a Booker novel in such a collection of characters, but I fear there is not going to be any profit."
November 8, 1991





"Heavily pregnant, Alice had plonked herself down in the doorway — no doubt in order to enjoy the cooling breeze around her rear end while at the same time giving her snout the inner warmth of the sty. I employed a technique not used in obstetrics for some time and shouted: 'Get up you daft bitch!'"
July 6, 1991

Ruth Gledhill attends a carol service at a City church reopened after damage by an IRA bomb

New hope rises from the ruins

"REJOICE, rejoice! Emmanuel." we sang, but we were celebrating more than the birth of Christ at St Helen Bishopsgate in the heart of the City of London. The best present for the congregation of St Helen's this year has been the return of their church — renovated and shining white.

St Helen's, a medieval church named after the mother of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, survived the Great Fire of London and the Blitz, but was closed after damage caused by the IRA bomb which wrecked Baltic Exchange in 1992. The congregation moved to St Botolph nearby, but this church, too, closed after an IRA bomb a year later, when more harm was done to St Helen's. Four people were killed in the two bombings.

After St Botolph's closed, St Helen's worshippers, who make up the biggest congregation in the City (if not the London diocese), were squeezed into the smaller St Peter's Cornhill, and went from there to St Andrew Undershaft. But hope was not lost. Indeed it was gained by some who saw the enforced closures as an opportunity to refurbish the old interior of St Helen's.

After a nine-day court hearing, where leading conservationists opposed plans to undo an earlier Victorian restoration, Quinlan Terry, an architect and lay reader, was given the go-ahead for his £2 million restoration plans. As administrator Elizabeth King has written, in a moving testimony of the last four years: "These bombs gave us an opportunity to stand up for what we believe and to witness to the City and the world the supreme importance of the Gospel."

Although the official reopening will take place at the end of January, the clergy decided that the church should not go unused at Christmas, and one of the first services was the carol service I attended.

The church, whose interior has been re-angled 90 degrees so that all seats face the 17th-century pulpit on the south wall, was packed, mainly with students and youngsters in casual dress, some with their parents, staff from nearby hospitals and City office workers.

The white-painted walls offset the black timbers of the roof and pulpit, and with the dark pews gone, the sense was of being in a church at once ancient and modern. Room has been made for more seats by moving the somewhat brassy organ from the south transept to a new gallery, from which trumpets sounded during the more splendid carols, and violins soothed our ears during gentler ones. Regular worshippers said the church felt lighter, more spacious than before.

We were welcomed by the Rev John Juckes, one of a ministry team headed by the rector, the Rev Dick Lucas, who is a leading evangelical in the Church of England and a founding member of Reform, a group campaigning for a return to strictly Biblical Christianity.

DENZIL McNEELANCE

Musicians in the gallery at the newly restored St Helen Bishopsgate

As in all the best carol services, we were given hymns that all would know. We sang *Hark! the herald-angels sing*, *O little town of Bethlehem* and *O come, all ye faithful*, and could have stayed for more.

We prayed that many would this Christmas walk "in the footsteps of the shepherds and discover the Lord Jesus". We prayed for those "who may find this Christmas particularly lonely or sad or cold or difficult".

We heard a reading from Isaiah: "People walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned."

The most effective part of the service was a short, humorous sketch, featuring two "lager louts", one of whom, embarrassed, admits to the other that he will be going to church at Christmas.

"But you told me you didn't believe in God," the other says, astonished. His increasingly shamefaced friend mutters: "Yes, well, it's important for the kids; you've got to bring your kids up right." "But," says the other, "you haven't got any children."

They move on to discuss the meaning of the nativity. Myrrh must surely be some kind of shampoo or bubble bath, they speculate, and Mary could not be a virgin, because that's impossible. "Are you sure it doesn't say Virgo, the Virgo Mary?" asks the sceptic, who ends by dismissing the entire Christmas story as "utter boloney".

He argues: "You want to stick to something you can really believe in, like Father Christmas."

St Helen Bishopsgate, Great St Helen's, London EC3A 6AT (0171-283 2231).

AT YOUR SERVICE

A five-star guide

RECTOR:
Prebendary Richard Lucas

ARCHITECTURE:
Once a Benedictine nunnery, St Helen's recent transformation seems little short of miraculous. ★★★★★

SERMON:
John Chapman, an Australian evangelist, said Christmas was "about being adopted into the family of God." ★★★

MUSIC:
Organ, choir, trumpets and violins. ★★★★

LITURGY:
Readings, carols, sermon and sketch. ★★★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE:
Mince pies, tea and coffee. The collection was split between Oasis, a *trust working among London's* homeless, and ACET, a agency for people with Aids. ★★★★

SPIRITUAL HIGH:
A sense of reaching the top after a particularly arduous climb.The people at St Helen's refused to give in. ★★★★★

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OUTDOORS

Concrete mixers head for Kipling country

East Sussex needs more homes. But plans for a new town are getting a mixed reception. **Jill Parkin** reports

Few ice-cream vans have such a splendid view. Kipling called it "the wooded, dim, blue goodness of the Weald". It's the flat bit between the north and south Downs. And every weekend hundreds of people come up to Ditchling Beacon to have a cornet and gaze at the Weald.

Below us are church towers, villages, fields and roads following their roman routes. And, if the Government has its way, within a few years there may be one new town, maybe two. With 4.4 million new homes needed in the next two decades, such views will be changing all over England.

In stories like this, you usually see the chief planner in his anorak standing under a condemned tree, looking up at a protestor who has been occupying the uppermost branches since the bulldozers and the television cameras appeared. Predictable polarities. What about the rest of us?

"It's the ultimate blot on the landscape," says David Arscott, author of several books on Sussex and of an angry letter to East Sussex County Council, the reluctant implementers of Whitehall's rural housing policy. Mr Arscott moved into the hamlet of Westmeston only a few months ago. From the windows of his 17th-century cottage he has a fine view of Kipling's "whale-backed Downs". Now he would stop others moving in and enjoying the same view from brand new double-glazed UPVC sliding patio doors and the windows of housing association flats.

He defends himself against the charge of nimbyism. "Sussex has suffered enough. It's already lost a fair amount of its character. There's been a great sprawl of building all the way from Gatwick airport to within ten miles of the coast. I'm extremely conscious that the Sussex I write about and make radio programmes about is often a half-remembered thing.

"There's been such an influx of people from outside that it's fanciful these days to talk of a Sussex character or sense of humour, a distinctive way of life. The vestiges of that probably disappeared between the wars. What we still have is a recognisable countryside of well-wooded Weald, rolling Downs, and coast. Now another part of the Weald is under threat. Where will the concrete mixers stop?"

As he speaks on top of the windy Beacon, he waves his hands towards the Weald. But is he whistling in the wind as well as waving in it? More likely than not.

The annual 2,333 homes East Sussex has to provide until 2006 are already in the pipeline, mainly conversion, redevelopment and infill building in existing towns. There's little opposition to that. It's what is expected to happen after 2006 that has caused the "No to New Town" posters to spring up in the countryside around the county town of Lewes.

House building is expected to go on at the same rate after 2006 and new towns are the only way of meeting predicted demand. Between 2006 and 2011, there's likely to be at least one new settlement of at least 1,200 new homes, with lots of room for growth. It will mean housing, roads and places to work.

"Who's going to buy all these houses?" everyone asks. The planners' answer is: "All of us." Rather like those other blots on the landscape, the huge out-of-town superstores, the new towns are a result of the way we live now. We need one-stop shopping with child-and-parent parking spaces and we need homes for smaller family units. More people are divorcing, more are living alone, and we're living longer.

> 'There are lots of For Sale signs but not much to rent'

Mr Arscott's reaction is typical of most of the letters East Sussex County Council has had in response to the idea of a new town between Lewes and the commuter town of Burgess Hill to the west or Lewes and Polegate on the Eastbourne side. Choice is limited: about 63 per cent of Sussex is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

That's one reason why people come here — new towners and cottage dwellers alike.

I, too, moved into this neck of the woods. Call me a "good life" mother. I was driven by town-centre asthma, drugs in schools, the shopping-mall-every-Saturday culture. I want my children to go for a country walk if they're bored, not join the gang hanging around outside the local shops.

A woman I met at the local health clinic probably wants the same for her four-year-old daughter. Since her divorce, she's been living with her parents in Burgess Hill. "People need somewhere to live. There are lots of For Sale boards around here, but there's very little to rent," she says. "If this new town includes low-rent housing association places, then I'm all for it. I like a walk in the countryside as much as anyone, but they're not going to build on the Downs, and people should come first, shouldn't they?"

But how many women like her can the countryside take before the malls, the big schools and the petrol fumes send us cottage-dwelling good-life mothers moving on again?

You don't have to be a lone parent to see some good in the prospect of a new town. Vivian Howell is head of Chailey School, a 500-pupil comprehensive in the likely development area west of Lewes. A new settlement here would probably mean new buildings and facilities for her school. "It would be lovely to have lots of people wanting to send their children here, though I wouldn't want it to lose its character as a rural school.

"This is a lovely area, a particularly nice place for a new town. At the same time I can see why people are concerned not to see it ruined by development. It shouldn't be beyond the wit of man to build a place with as few problems as possible for the residents already here and for the environment. So I'm sitting on the fence," she says.

The county council admits that its hands are tied. It will take no pride in changing the view from Ditchling Beacon. Like planning authorities the country over, it has no real option. Public opinion will be canvassed, but the canvas of England will never be the same again.

After all, the low Weald isn't that special. Tony Whitbread, conservation officer of the Sussex Wildlife Trust, says: "It's a piece of nice English countryside. A healthy environment isn't only about what is special or rare. We must also look after the commonplace and characteristic."

Having said that, he lists several species of plant in the low Weald which are rare, either nationally or locally: spiked rampion, marsh gentian, black poplars. There are areas of heathland, ancient woodland, bluebells and hornbeam coppice, too.

"Development should be resource-fed," Mr Whitbread says. "We should look at what the environment will stand and work within that rather than look at the demands and try to meet them whatever the cost.

"It's chicken and egg to a certain extent. We know, for example, that if we build more roads we get more cars. Do we have to have all this development?"

David Lang, a local vet and orchid expert, is passionate about the natural environment of the county, but thinks something may be gained through compromise, rather than confrontation, with the planners.

"The thing to do," he says, "is to get in early and work with them. Botanically, we are the best-covered county in Britain. We know what we've got and where it is.

Some simply think it is inevitable. Frank Hall is 82 and has cycled these lanes daily since he was a boy, committing helmetless heresy where trucks and concrete lorries could soon be grinding and spewing by. "It keeps the legs going," he says. He lives in a small cottage under Ditchling Beacon and has watched the growth of all that commuter sprawl Mr Arscott talks about. "It's a shame, but I suppose it will happen," he says.

"I remember the yellow ribbons that the protestors against the Brighton bypass tied on the trees which would be cut down. But they built the bypass all the same."

So, in rural Sussex as in the rest of rural England, there are the antis, the pros, the fence-sitters, the compromisers and the resigned. Kipling, who made Sussex his home, started one of his poems: "Take of English earth as much as either hand may rightly clutch." But whose hand? Whose right?

ANDREW HASSON

David Arscott enjoys the far-reaching view from Ditchling Beacon. A new town would be "the ultimate blot on the landscape," he says

Holly villain

Feather report

IF YOU had your eye on a particularly fine spray of holly berries and have just found that it has been devastated, the villain is probably a mistle thrush. Though the name indicates the bird's liking for mistletoe berries, it is, in fact, especially fond of ripe, red holly berries. Either way, it is no friend to Christmas.

However, some trees and bushes may have been spared. In winter, a single mistle thrush, or a pair, will take up possession of a territory with hollies or yews in it, and guard it fiercely against blackbirds and other berry-lovers. But the mistle thrushes will not necessarily eat the berries straightaway. If the weather is mild, they will continue to look for insects in the grass, and keep the berries for harder times.

They are very handsome birds, almost as big as a dove, with bold spotting on their chests. The spots seem to be arranged in horizontal bands, whereas the song thrush, which is slightly smaller, has narrower spots that run down its breast vertically.

Spotted: the mistle thrush

The mistle thrushes fly high, closing their wings from time to time, but hardly dipping in their flight. They show a flash of silver underwing. The song thrush has a delicate golden-brown underwing, but you rarely see it, because it flies low when disturbed.

Both thrushes have started singing again in the last few weeks. The song thrush has a call full of varied phrases. The mistle thrush repeats a single wild phrase, which always ends abruptly. But it sings on, high in a tree, through the worst of weather, and for that reason is sometimes called the storm-cock. It looks as if it may well deserve its name this winter.

DERWENT MAY

● **What's about:** *Birders — look out for flocks of mixed finches and buntings. Twitchers — rose-coloured starling at Bickington, Devon; great grey shrike at Capel Coch; Anglesey; long-billed dowitcher at Tophill Low, Humberside. Details from Birdline, 0891 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap rate, 50p a minute at all other times.*

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'Animal Magic' at the Transport Museum in London

LONDON WC2
Animal Magic at the Transport Museum

Fun for the children, at the museum's latest exhibition of posters promoting 90 years of public transport to London Zoo, includes: a close encounter of the creepy kind on December 30, when spiders, reptiles and megabugs visit the museum, 'Zooper Fun' workshops, that bring out the creative instincts with animal inspired posters, hats and decorations on December 27 and 28 and Zoo face painting on December 31. Other activities for younger visitors include Tram Tales (December 27 and 29) and a walk tracking animal and zoo clues around the Museum on the 'Animal Crackers' trail.

Admission £4.25 adults, £2.50 children and senior citizens, £10.50 family ticket

Passport holders are entitled to £1 off adult entry, £2 off family ticket, and 50p off children's admission

Covent Garden Piazza Tel 0171 836 8557

Sat–Thu 10am–6pm Fri 11am–6pm

Zoo Poster Exhibition runs until June 30

(closed December 24–26)

BUXTON, DERBYSHIRE
Gaze on Glass at the Buxton Museum and Art Gallery

View this colourful display of over 20 back-lit stained glass abstract and religious works and portraits by David Griffiths of the Canterbury Cathedral Stained Glass Studios. David Griffiths will be at the gallery on Saturday January 6 to discuss and demonstrate stained glass craft skills.

Admission to 'Gaze on Glass' is free

Passport holders are entitled to free entry to the rest of the museum (usual admission £1)

Terrace Road Tel 01298 24658

Tue–Fri 9.30am–5.30pm Sat 9.30-5pm

Exhibition runs until January 13

(closed Dec 24–Jan 1 inclusive)

NEWLYN, CORNWALL
Winter Show and Coasting at the Newlyn Art Gallery

This year, the 100 year old Newlyn Society of Artists' Winter Exhibition comprises over 100 works supplemented by 'Coasting', a show by a group of artists from Hastings. Hastings, St Ives and Penzance are small coastal towns, surviving on tourism and fishing, with their own thriving artistic communities. All works in the show, from prints to large scale paintings are for sale. Prices range from £200-£500.

Admission by donation

Passport holders are entitled to 5% discount on all paintings in the exhibition and shop.

New Road, Newlyn, Penzance Tel 01736 63715

Mon–Sat 10am–5pm

Exhibition runs until January 6

(closed Dec 25–26 & Jan 1)

SKIPTON, N YORKSHIRE
Happy Tank Engines at the Embsay Steam Railway

New Year's Day is family day. See Embsay's Happy Tank Engines wearing their very best faces, hauling trains full of travellers from Holywell Halt to Stoneacre Loop. The five mile round trip takes 45 minutes. All children riding on 'Yorkshire's Friendly Line' receive a late Christmas gift from Embsay's volunteers.

Admission £3 adult, £3 child (includes gift)

Passport holders entitled to £1 reduction on adult admission

Skipton, North Yorkshire Tel 01756 795 189

Event takes place only January 1

Trains depart every half hour 10.30am to 3.30pm

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THE TIMES

Lessons in muck and milk

A charity gives children with cramped city lives the chance to broaden their horizons on a working farm

Some children were just getting the hang of rural life: one or two were always first with answers to "What is a ram?" and "Where does milk come from?"; and others fidgeted and hung back, not sure yet of their place in this unfamiliar scenario. After all, how much more different can two places be than a Devon farm and an inner-city primary school?

The 30 youngsters from Burbage Junior School in Hoxton, north London, were two days into their week as working visitors to Nethercott Farm near Okehampton in Devon. Run by the charity Farms for City Children (FCC), Nethercott is not a holiday centre but a working farm offering seven to 11-year-olds the chance to experience a way of life they might never otherwise encounter.

Burbage's head teacher, Audrey Brightwell, has been a fan of Nethercott almost since it opened in 1976 and is now bringing the offspring of those first pupils, "most of whom live in flats and have a cramped environment.

"A week here gives them another perspective on the world. And some of them have a very short attention span, so the highly structured and busy routine suits them," she added, doling out boiled sweets to cheer the stragglers. We were setting out on that morning's task, to shepherd a flock of sheep into a distant pasture and take out food supplements to grazing calves.

It was clear that many of the children were not used to walking on the flat, let alone over the hill, down dale and across streams. Nor were they used to wearing Wellingtons, some of which had been bought specially for the occasion. But, although some of them were growing tired, they all soldiered on and nobody withdrew when a herd of hungry young calves trotted quickly towards them.

Chantelle, 11, was on her second visit, by request: "We collect eggs to eat the next day and get the milk from the cows to have with our cereal," she said, as she and her friend Maureen, also 11, gave me a guided tour of the rambling farmhouse. "I'm definitely sending my children here," she said.

One of Maureen's newly discovered joys was sitting on the wide bedroom windowsill at night and reading. "I like to see the view; it makes me feel happier."

Would the girls like to swap inner-city life for the country? They had mixed feelings. "It doesn't make you sick like the traffic smells do, but it's too quiet at night and quite hard to sleep."

However, the idea is not to win children over to rural life, which is, anyway, no easier than living in a city. "The aim is to make children aware of the world around them so that they can come to terms with it and grow," say two of the founders, the Michael Morpurgo, a children's author, and his wife Clare.

"No generation of children has been more stimulated by television and computers, but it is all second-hand experience," says Mr Morpurgo, whose books include *Why the Whales Came*. "It was becoming more and more difficult to hold the children's attention."

The charity leased a second farm from the National Trust in Pembrokeshire in 1990. The third, a medieval pile that was falling into its own moat in Gloucestershire, was recently awarded £331,000 from the National Lottery's Heritage Fund, which has meant they can start building next month and have the farm operating by January 1997.

Each farm takes more than 1,000 children a year, mostly from London, but also from other large towns and cities, such as Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester.

"The countryside is so foreign to these children that some of them ask, 'When are we going back to England?'" says Mrs Morpurgo who, as principal fund-raiser, has to find £120,000 annually to pay for running costs, partly because each child costs £40 above the fee of £102 for a seven-day stay. Each new farm costs £1 million to get up and running.

Despite the beauty of the three sites, this is not fair-weather farming. All year round, children as young as seven are up at 7am, putting in five or six hours of useful labour: feeding; mucking out; herding; and learning how to take responsibility not just for the animals but for themselves and each other.

Graham Ward's family is the third generation to farm the land adjoining Nethercott. As with the other FCC farms, the land is managed with the contracted aid of neighbouring landowners.

"It takes a bit longer with the children helping, but it's very satisfying and the work gets done," he says. "After a week they get to pick up the pattern of the day and know which jobs they still have to do. They begin to realise just what's involved: 40 cows, for instance, produce a tonne of manure a day."

Nethercott has 80 cows — which means a lot of muck and a lot of milk. There are also 500 breeding ewes to tend and 40 acres of corn to be sown and reaped for fodder. A few pigs in an orchard is the only concession to what Mr Ward terms "picture book" farming.

Last month *Muck and Magic*, a children's anthology, was published, edited by Michael Morpurgo, and containing 11 rural tales by writers such as Ted Hughes and Dick King-Smith (of *Babe* fame). All the royalties go to FCC.

Quentin Blake's cover illustration is characteristically witty and chaotic. The children of Burbage Junior School were much better behaved.

JENNY McCLEAN

● *Farms for City Children, Nethercott House, Iddesleigh, Winkleigh, Devon EX19 8BG (01837 810573).* Muck and Magic, *with a foreword by the Princess Royal, the FCC patron, is published by Mammoth and Heinemann at £11.99 hardback, £3.99 paperback. Two cassettes, read by Joanna Lumley, one of the contributors, cost £3.99 each.*

JENNY McCLEAN

Nethercott Farm: for some children this may be the only chance to experience rural life

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هكذا من الأصل

GARDENING

In the first of a two-part series, **Tony Lord** celebrates Sissinghurst

TONY LORD

At Sissinghurst, the sumptuous *Rosa* 'Nuits de Young' is typical of the old roses that Vita Sackville-West loved. *R.* 'Vanity' *and R. Mundi* add to the spectacle

The flowering of Vita's vision

On April 4, 1930, Vita Sackville-West and her younger son Nigel went to see Sissinghurst in Kent, then little more than a series of ruinous buildings surrounded by derelict farmland. In the 16th century, Sissinghurst had belonged to Sir John Baker, whose daughter Cecily married Sir Thomas Sackville, later owner of Knole. Thus for centuries Sissinghurst had been owned by Vita's ancestors. Overwhelmed by its romance and ignoring all the difficulties, she told her husband, Harold, that she had found the ideal home. He visited and then wrote to Vita on April 24:

'My view is:

(a) That it is most unwise of us to get Sissinghurst. It costs us £12,000 to buy and will cost another good £15,000 to put in order. This will mean nearly £30,000 before we have done with it. For £30,000 we could buy a beautiful place replete with park, garage, h. and c., central heating, historical associations, and two lodges r. and l.

(b) That it is most wise of us to buy Sissinghurst. Through its veins pulses the blood of the Sackville dynasty. True it is that it comes through the female line — but then we are both feminist, and after all Knole came in the same way. It is, for you, an ancestral mansion: that makes up for company's water and h.and c.

(c) It is in Kent. It is in a part of Kent we like. It is self-contained. I could make a lake. The boys could ride.

(d) We like it.

Harold acquiesced. On May 7 Vita bought Sissinghurst.

Of all Sissinghurst's flowers, it was the roses that captured Vita's imagination, their colours gorgeous or delicate, their textures of velvet or satin, with evocative fragrance and generously abundant blooms borne in early summer, Vita's favourite time of year. The science and art of pruning and training old roses and Hybrid Musks have developed to exemplary standards at Sissinghurst over the years. So too has the companion planting, chosen both to complement the roses and to extend the season of display. There have been continual refinements to the structure of the Rose Garden, its paths and hedges, both to enhance its proportions and to enable it to withstand the high numbers of visitors.

It was some time after Harold and Vita had moved to Sissinghurst that the Rose Garden was planted, having been used as the kitchen garden from 1932-7. In 1932, Harold and Vita fenced its boundaries and planted the yew rondel.

The planting of the rose garden is quite different from that of any other part of the garden and probably most typical of Vita's style. It is episodic, not at all like the Cottage Garden, White Garden or Purple border where colours, form and texture have been worked into a symphonic whole. Textures are soft with little use of contrasting foliage, save for the dagger of iris leaves. Vita was one of the most influential voices encouraging gardeners to grow old roses. Her love of old roses was never more evocatively expressed than in her foreword to Graham Thomas's *The Old Shrub Roses* in 1955:

"Mr Thomas swept me quite unexpectedly back to those dusky mysterious hours in an Oriental storehouse where the rugs and carpets of Isfahan and Bokhara and Samarcand were unrolled in their dim but sumptuous colouring and richness of texture for our slow delight. Rich they were, rich as a fig broken open, soft as a ripened peach, freckled as an apricot, coral as a pomegranate, bloomy as a bunch of grapes...

"The next need is to discard the idea that roses must be limited to certain accepted and accustomed colours, and to welcome the less familiar purples and lilacs, and the striped, flaked, mottled variations which recall the old Dutch flower-paintings; to approach them, in fact, with open and unprejudiced eyes, and also with a nose that esteems the true scent of a rose warmed by the sun. They have one major fault, and Mr Thomas does not evade it: their flowering period is limited to one glorious month of midsummer. Personally, I think they are more than worth it."

● *Edited extract taken from* Gardening at Sissinghurst *by Tony Lord (Frances Lincoln in association with the National Trust, £25).*

● *The garden at Sissinghurst (National Trust), is open April 2-Oct 15, Tues-Fri 1-6.30pm, Sat, Sun and Good Friday 10am-5.30pm. Closed Mon, including Bank Holidays Mon. Last admission half an hour before closing. £5, children £2.50.*

NEXT WEEK: Harold Nicolson in the garden

GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q I would like to grow mistletoe in my garden, *but have only a newly planted* apple tree to grow it on. Will it harm a young tree? — Mr F. James, Lewes, Sussex.

A Mistletoe, *Viscum album*, does not have to grow on apple trees. If you have a white poplar or a robinia these too can play host to mistletoe. Occasionally it even grows on oak. Mistletoe is a hemiparasite; it lives off its host plant as well as making energy from the chlorophyll in its own leaves. It would be better to give your apple a few years start before giving it the burden of mistletoe.

To plant mistletoe, simply press a white berry on to the youngish bark of the host, preferably at a fork. The substance of the berry sets like glue, and the seed should germinate within and penetrate the tree. Plant several to improve your chances of a successful take. Male and female plants are required to produce berries. In nature, the job of planting is done by birds, which deposit the half-digested berry direct on to the branches.

Q This summer a friend brought me some Joshua tree seeds from a holiday in America and the Mojave desert. They have germinated and are now 4in tall in pots. Can you advise me on care and particularly watering? — Mr M. Barry, Bolton, Lancashire.

A The Joshua tree, *Yucca brevifolia*, is one of the larger species of yucca and can grow to a dramatic 30ft or more in its native habitat. For all its size, the spiny sword-shaped leaves are only a foot long, whereas the shrubby *Yucca gloriosa* we grow here has leaves twice that length. The creamy flowers have an unpleasant odour. The tree can stand extremes of heat and cold, but not the combined cold and wet of a Lancashire winter. For us it must effectively be an indoor plant. It will require all the light it can possibly get; a heated greenhouse would be best. A gritty, soil-based compost will be needed, kept decidedly dry in winter and watered from below when necessary. In summer the plant could be lifted outdoors while it is still manageable.

Q I have inherited a border of primarily yellow plants, and have decided to add blue and white flowering plants for next season. However, underneath a 10ft yellow Moroccan broom is a bright pink hydrangea. Can I use a proprietary blueing agent to change the hydrangea's colour? Would this affect the broom, and when should I use it? Or should I replace the hydrangea with a blue form? — Ms S. Woodage, Wimbledon.

A Hydrangeas are bluest on acid soils where there are plenty of iron and aluminium salts available to the plants. In limey soils these salts are not available and the colours become pink or red. By all means use a blueing agent, according to the manufacturer's instructions. It is unlikely to affect the broom in any detrimental way. But if you are on a limey soil and you want to go in for careful colour combinations, it may be better to change the hydrangea for a plant which is more naturally at home.

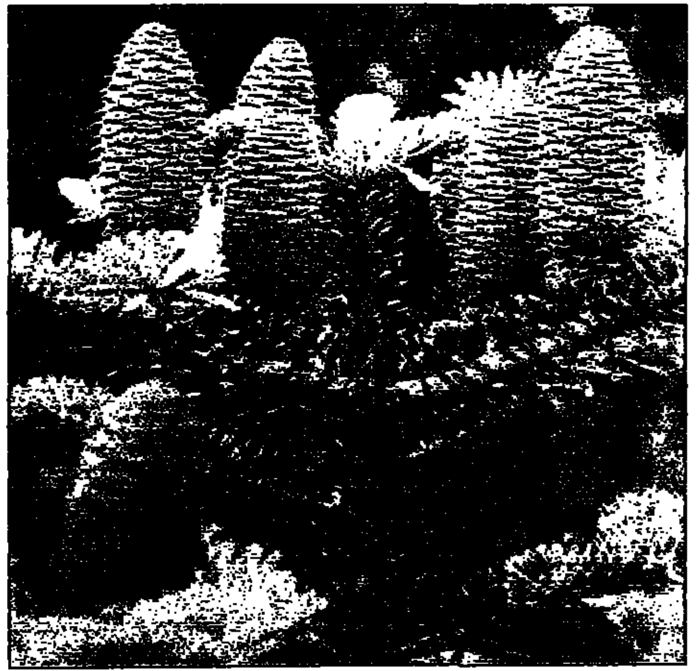
If the shrub is growing healthily, try the colour change first before you dig it out. Winter is the time to get the blueing agent on, so buy some now. The blues of hydrangeas vary a great deal and the result may suit or jar with your colour scheme.

● *Readers wishing to have gardening problems answered should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN. We regret that few personal answers can be given and that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.* The Times *regrets that enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.*

Trees that give winter colour

Stephen Anderton chooses conifers which look best in the garden

TERENCE EXLEY



The violet-purple cones of the dramatic South Korean fir

At this quietest time of year in the garden, there is nothing quite so resolutely promising as a good display of cones on a healthy, well-formed conifer.

Some conifers have a place in a small garden, others where space is more generous, while cones from the grandaddy conifers may perhaps only be picked up on a walk in the woods or some great park. Every child loves to collect them, usually insisting that parents carry them until — hands full — their resinous shapes have to be stuffed into pockets and later unloaded, spinning and bouncing onto the hearth.

The most dramatic conifer for small gardens is the South Korean fir, *Abies koreana*. It is a neat, slow-growing species with attractive white resinous buds in winter, but its violet-purple cones, which are sometimes produced even on waist-high trees, are its chief attraction.

These you would not want to pull off, for they are so decorative on the tree and are in place for two seasons, maturing, ripening, and finally breaking up on the tree. When the Korean fir is first planted, you must wait a few years for it to settle down to flowering but, like a handkerchief tree, once it has begun it is reliable.

Fir trees, from the genus *Abies*, hold their cones upright on the branches, whereas spruces, from the genus *Picea*, hold them downwards, which is a great help when it comes to putting a name to a tree. Spruce cones fall at the end of their second year, whereas fir cones break up on the tree.

Cedars also break up on the tree, leaving those curious little central spindles ranked like candles along the flat planes of the branches. Cedar cones are especially attractive. The barrel shape of closely pressed scales asks to be fitted perfectly in the hand. But in their first year the natural waterproofing resin makes them sticky and staining.

In the second year they begin to break up, and if collected for decoration then will quickly deteriorate. On balance they are best enjoyed on the tree. Some cones never come to earth except in a disaster. There are species of pine which hold their cones for years and years, and only release their seed after the heat of a forest fire.

Pinus radiata, that great shelter-belt tree of our south-western gardens, does this, and so does its sister Californian, *Pinus muricata*. If you look up into their branches you will see clusters of fist-sized cones, clamped tight not to twigs but to thick branches.

Some years ago I cleared up some branches of *Pinus muricata* which had been broken by snow. The cones were packed in clusters around the branches. The wooden core of each was grown as part of the tree itself, and the few cones I saved took considerable effort to wrench away. The remaining branches went on a bonfire. And sure enough, those cones which escaped conflagration at the edge of the fire began to flex their wooden muscles and open up, releasing their seed.

You might imagine that dwarf Scots pines, of the kind grown in heather gardens, might be attractive for their modest cones, but the branch structure of most is so congested that the opportunity for display is lost.

The same goes for the more congested forms of mountain pine, *Pinus mugo*. However, hedges of the blue Arizona cypress, *Cupressus glabra* 'Pyramidalis' bear many small but conspicuous cones, little spheres less than an inch across, of interlocking plates. The first year cones are tight and green, and look ready to explode like miniature sea mines. The tiny, spiky yellow cones of the Japanese cedar, *Cryptomeria japonica*, are attractive too. If I had room for just one large conifer (apart from yews of course) it might be the Noble fir, *Abies procera* 'Glauca', a grey-blue, strong-growing tree, which can begin to produce its 7-8in cones on trees only 15ft high.

Sometimes they are so tall that they lean drunkenly outwards from the branches unable to support their weight. I love the contrast of the brown cones with the blue foliage under winter sun. Fir and spruce cones are not woody in the way pines are. Their structure is made of softer scales and bracts all carefully interleaved.

The 3in cones of Douglas fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, are lightness itself, and the points of the bracts poke out between the scales like snakes tongues as they do on the long, drooping cones of the ordinary Norway spruce, *Picea abies*. Dry pine cones, being both woody and resinous, make the most excellent firelighters. They are invaluable for rekindling a dying fire, but fir cones smoulder like cotton wool.

In Northumberland, where red squirrels were until recently the only species to be found, you can find two kinds of Scots pine cones; those which have fallen from the trees and are whole, and those reduced just to their central spindle and cast aside.

Squirrels hold them in both hands and nibble off the scales to find the seed. The marvellous thing about conifers is that before the rest of the garden wakes up in spring they are busy again. Flowering starts well before any tree is making new shoots. On windy March days, when the sun begins to give a little warmth, you could be forgiven for thinking someone had lit a fire under the trees; for mature yews and Nootka cypresses give off clouds of white pollen with every gust. You know then that spring is on the way.

WEEKEND TIPS

- *Take root cuttings in a pot of plants such as phlox, acanthus, verbascum and forms of* Geranium sanguineum.
- *Protect house plants from the two evils of overheated rooms and the cold draught sweeping window ledges behind the curtains.*
- *Top dress fruit trees under glass with manure and bonemeal.*
- *Relieve shrubs bent under the weight of snow very gently, before it freezes on, as the stems will be cold and brittle.*

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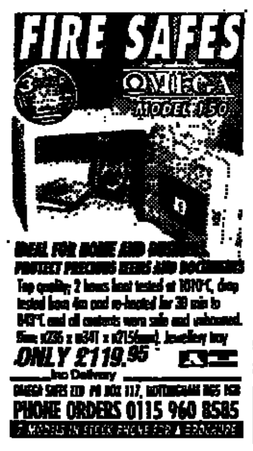

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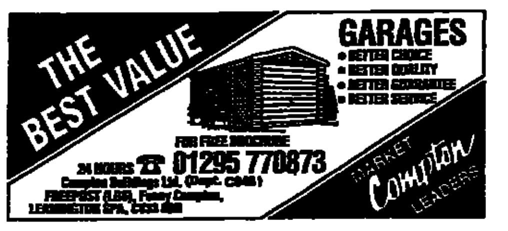

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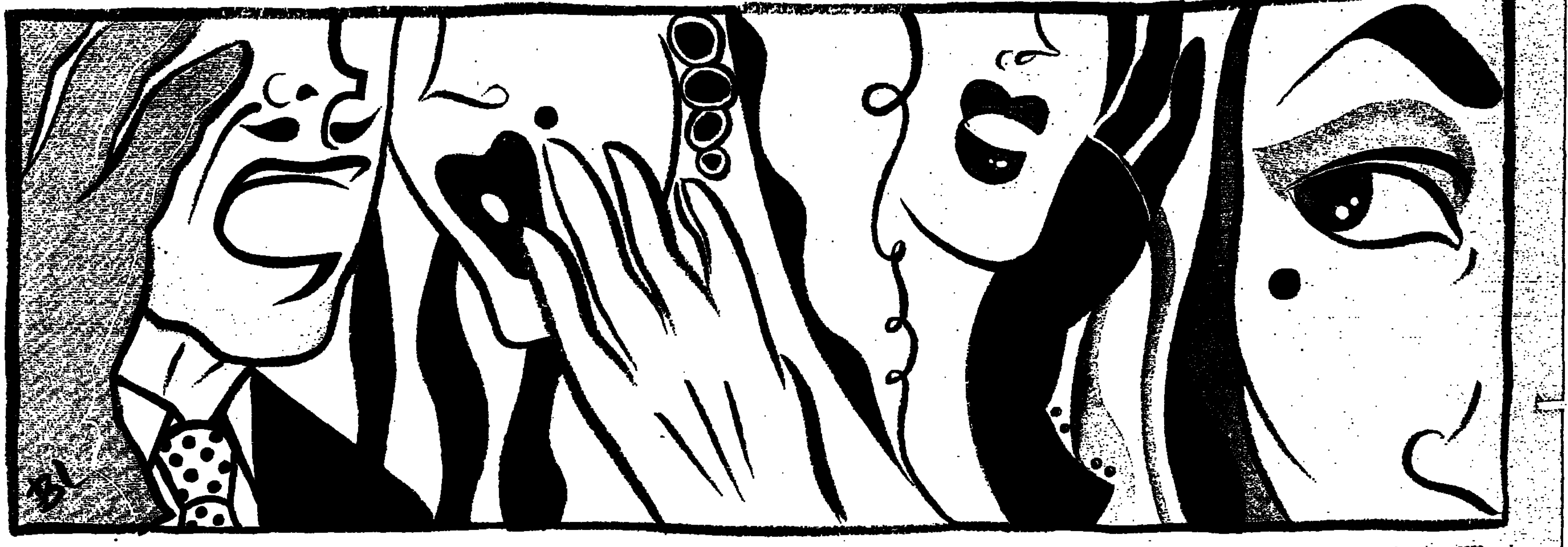
As you prepare for the midwinter madness that grips the stores, here is our guide to what's on offer ...



Where early birds can get the best bargains

LONDON STORES

☐ **Fenwick**
New Bond Street W1 (0171-629 9161). From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off items throughout the store. Nicole Farhi women's Fair Isle knit cardigans were £119, sale price £59 (matching sweaters were £99, sale price £49); Nicole Farhi satin jackets were £199, sale price £99 (matching skirts were £79, sale price £55); all Mondi collections reduced by 30-50 per cent; Fenn, Wright and Manson reduced by up to 30 per cent; Betty Barclay reduced by up to 50 per cent; 30 per cent off selected bags by Bill Amberg, Patrick Cox and Giorgio Armani.

☐ **Fortnum & Mason**
181 Piccadilly, W1 (0171-734 8040). From Dec 28.
Up to 50 per cent off selected lines throughout the store. Missoni, Georges Rech, Jasper Conran, Tomasz Starzewski and Maxmara reduced by one third; Gennyway and Betty Jackson half price; up to 50 per cent off childrenswear; selected men's suits were £495, sale price £245; La Perla lingerie half price; Hanro lingerie reduced by one third; Shakira Caine necklace reduced from £113, to £75.

☐ **Harrods**
87 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge SW1 (0171-730 1234). From Jan 3.
Up to 55 per cent off many items throughout the store, with an extra 10 per cent off Harrods account customers' purchases made on Jan 6. Any customer spending £200 or more in a single transaction during the first four days of the sale will have the chance to be entered into a draw to win a Vauxhall Monterey Diamond. Sale items include 50 per cent off Carrs of Sheffield sterling silver cutlery in seven patterns, eg, 44-piece canteen was £2,999, sale price £1,499; 55 per cent off Atlantis Lyric full-lead crystal; Magimix 4100 Food Processor was £139.95, sale price £119.95; 50 per cent off Bertoni luggage, eg, 80cm suitcase was £1,200, sale price £600; 50 per cent off many pianos; Nicole Farhi navy full-length women's double-breasted coat was £399, sale price £239; 30 per cent off Amanda Wakeley and Jasper Conran dress and occasion wear; women's Pringle cashmere crew neck sweater was £199, sale price £99; children's Ralph Lauren polo shirts were £48, sale price £19; girls' Lesy velour coats were £48, sale price £19; men's Whyte & Smith cashmere blend socks were £39.95, sale price £16.95; men's Jasper Conran suits were £395, sale price £295; Harrods men's towelling bathrobes were £75, sale price £45.

☐ **Harvey Nichols**
109-125 Knightsbridge, London SW1 (0171-235 5000). From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off many items. During the first four days of the sale there will be an additional 10 per cent discount for current Harvey Nichols account card holders.

☐ **House of Fraser**
Army & Navy, Victoria Street SW1 (0171-834 1234); Barkers, Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 5432); Dickens & Jones, Regent Street W1 (0171-734 7070); D.H. Evans, Oxford Street, W1 (0171-629 8800); D.H. Evans, High Road, Wood Green, N22 (0181-889 3111). From Dec 27. Scotland: from Boxing Day.
Up to 50 per cent off items throughout the stores. At least one third off womenswear by Kenzo Jeans, Kenzo Jungle, Transit, Cartoon, Moschino, Monix, French Connection, Amaya Arzuaga and Gaultier Jeans; selected Tula handbags at half price; Romantique embellished bedlinen half price, eg, double duvet cover was £70, sale price £35; Christy Cleopatra plain dyed towels at 40 per cent discount — eg, hand towel was £10, sale price £6; 30 per cent off selected Ralph Lauren towels (selected stores only); Drifter Goose Down Duet duvets half recommended retail price; Le Creuset cast iron cookware in American Green and American Burgundy discounted by 40 per cent; 50 per cent off Judge Satin stainless steel cookware; 20 per cent off ready-made curtains; Argentum sterling silver cutlery — 60 piece canteen was £3,999, sale price £1,999; Sony Mini HiFi MHC 5900 Dolby Pro Logic stereo was £999.99, sale price £599.99; Tefal iron was £43.99, sale price £33.99; Electrolux vacuum cleaner was £179.99, sale price £129.99.

☐ **John Lewis**
Oxford Street W1 (0171-629 7711); Brent Cross Shopping Centre (0181-202 6535); Peter Jones, Sloane Square SW1 (0171-730 3434). From Dec 28 at Oxford Street, Peter Jones, & Brent Cross; from Dec 29 at Kingston branch.
Discounts on discontinued stock, seconds and slight imperfects, and goods which manufacturers have offered at a discount to the John Lewis partnership. The "Never Knowingly Undersold" policy is still in operation during the sale period. Ask in-store for further details. Jonelle Egyptian cotton deep pile towels (seconds) on offer, eg, face cloth £1.35, guest towel £3.45, bath towel £8.75, bath sheets £13 and bath mat £5.50; quilt covers were £23.50, sale price £14.50; (single/seconds); discontinued ready-made curtains were £75, sale price £55 (two widths x 228cm). Other sizes available.

☐ **Liberty**
214-220 Regent Street W1; and branches nationwide (0171-734 1234). From Dec 27 for two-three weeks.
Up to 50 per cent discount off items throughout the store. Gilt frame mirrors were £225, sale price £112; antique chinese blue and white ginger vase lampbases were £149, sale price £74.50; silver photo frames were £49.95, sale price £29.95; Royal Princess Lamont hand towels were £13.96, sale price £6.95 (bath towels were £20, sale price £10; bath sheets were £43, sale price £21.50); white towelling robes were £79, sale price £39; selected chrome or gold bathroom fittings at half price; Persian Bidjar Kelim rug was £450, sale price £225; Persian Kahan carpet was £3,500, sale price £1,750; Lagostina stainless steel three-piece pan set was £159.95, sale price £79.95; Carrs silver cutlery 60 piece set was £3,999, sale price £1,999; English Eccentrics devoré velvet scarves were £159, sale price £109; Jean Paul Gaultier jewellery at half price; Liberty print silk fabric by the metre was £14.95, sale price £10; printed Armani silk by the metre was £89.95, sale price £29.95; Liberty Veruna wool by the metre was £22, sale price £15; Wedgwood Amalfi china at 40 per cent discount; Villeroy & Boch Alegorie glassware half price; GP&J Baker furnishing fabrics Rustic collection was £41.75, sale price £19.95.

☐ **Selfridges**
Oxford Street W1 (0171-629 1234). From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off items throughout the store. Maxmara women's suit was £305, sale price £152; Betty Jackson jackets were £315, sale price £157; Versus by Versace suit was £519, sale price £259; Georges Rech coat was £369, sale price £184; Calvin Klein CK collection women's jackets were £350, sale price £175; Amanda Wakeley silk evening gown was £645, sale price £451; women's Moschino T-shirt £49, sale price £34; men's Hugo Boss, Nicole Farhi, YSL, CK by Calvin Klein and Victor Victoria all reduced by up to 50 per cent; men's Paul Smith reduced by up to 30 per cent; Giorgio Armani men's coats reduced by up to 30 per cent; selected Polo Ralph Lauren for men reduced by 30 per cent; childrenswear by Ralph Lauren, Levi, Guess, Armani, Pampolina, Osh Kosh and Naf Naf reduce by up to 30 per cent; selected Adrian Mann jewellery reduced by up to 75 per cent; selected Dinny Hall jewellery reduced by up to 25 per cent; David Morris Swiss watches reduced by up to 50 per cent; Philip Treacy hats were £230, sale price £115; Patricia Underwood hats were £305, sale price £152; selected handbags by DKNY, Fendi and Osprey reduced by up to 50 per cent; china seconds by Aynsley and Queens reduced by 33 per cent; Persian Shiraz rugs half price; AEG 1480 washer/dryer was £1,099, sale price £899; Admiral 22Si American Side by Side fridge/freezer was £1,889, sale price £1,499; Meyers 4ft 6in Hadleigh Divan set was £599, sale price £299.

AROUND BRITAIN

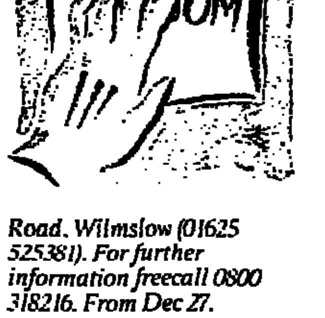
☐ **Bentalls**
High Street, Bracknell, Berks (01344 424678); Broadway Centre, Ealing, London W5 (0181-567 3040); Wood Street, Kingston upon Thames, southwest London (0181-546 1001); Lakeside Shopping Centre, West Thurrock, Essex (01708 860077); The Angel Centre, Tonbridge, Kent (01732 771177); 10-21 South Street, Worthing, West Sussex (0190 3318011). Lakeside store, from Dec 27; all other stores, from Dec 28. (Preview evening for account customers at Kingston, Ealing, Worthing, Bracknell and Tonbridge is Dec 27, 6-9pm).
Up to 50 per cent off most seasonal lines.

☐ **Debenhams**
334-348 Oxford Street, London W1, plus branches nationwide. For your nearest store, ring 0171-408 4444. From Dec 27. Scotland: from Boxing Day.
Bargains throughout the store.

☐ **Denners**
High Street, Yeovil, Somerset (01935 74444). From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off a wide range of fashions and household goods. Selected beds from Slumberland and Sleepeezee at half the recommended retail price; fashions by Jaeger, Viyella, Liz Claiborne, Country Casuals, Windsmoor, Wallis, Eastex, Alexon and Jacques Vert at half price or one third off.

☐ **Fenwick**
Brent Cross Shopping Centre, Hendon, London NW4 (0181-202 8200); Canterbury (01227 766866); Leicester (0116 2553322); Newcastle (0191 2325100); Tunbridge Wells (01892 516716); Windsor (01753 855537); York (01904 643322). From Dec 27 at all branches except Newcastle (Dec 28).
Up to 50 per cent off items throughout the stores.

☐ **Hoopers**
The Promenade, Cheltenham (01242 527505); North Street, Chichester (01243 533103); The Strand, Torquay (01803 212754); Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells (01892 530222); Hoopers For Men, The Great Hall, Tunbridge Wells (01892 529223); and Alderley Road, Wilmslow (01625 525381). For further information freecall 0800 318216. From Dec 27.
Selected items reduced by up to 50 per cent



☐ **House of Fraser**
Stores nationwide include Arnotts, Binns, David Evans, Dickens & Jones, Dingles, Frasers, Howells, Jollys, Kendalls, Rackhams and Schofield (inquiries 0171-963 2000). From Dec 27; Scotland: from Boxing Day.
See London listing for details.

☐ **John Lewis**
23 department stores nationwide. From Dec 28 at High Wycombe, Bainbridge, Cheadle, Edinburgh and Aberdeen (inquiries 0171-629 7711). All others start Dec 29.
See London listing for reductions.

FASHION AND ACCESSORIES

☐ **Ally Capellino**
95 Wardour Street, London W1 (0171-494 0768); general inquiries 0171-488 9777. From Dec 29-late Jan.
50 per cent off all home and gift products; 30-50 per cent off all clothing. Printed velvet coat was £565, now £240; chalk stripe double-breasted jacket was £360, now £180.

☐ **Amanda Wakeley**
80 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-584 4009). From Jan 5.
40-80 per cent off autumn/winter collections.

☐ **Anna Molinari Blumarine**
11-12 Old Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 4872). Sale now on.
Up to 25 per cent off selected merchandise.

☐ **Aquascutum**
100 Regent Street, London W1 (0800 286922). From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off selected lines.

☐ **Armand Basi**
12 Floral Street, London WC2 (0171-379 3843). From Jan 4.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items such as jersey polo shirts; 30 per cent off assorted knitwear; 20 per cent off leather garments.

☐ **Ballantyne Cashmere**
53a New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 4718). From Jan 4.
25 per cent off selected items.

☐ **Betty Jackson**
311 Brompton Road, London SW3 (0171-589 7884). Dec 27-end of Jan.
Everything reduced by 50 per cent, except leather and skin garments, which will be reduced by 30 per cent.

☐ **Blazer**
Branches nationwide. For your nearest store telephone: 0181-749 1251. From Dec 27. Gatwick and Glasgow branches from Boxing Day.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items.

☐ **Browns**
23-27 South Molton Street, London W1 and 6c Sloane Street, London SW1 (inquiries 0171-491 7833). From Jan 4.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items. Sonia Rykiel women's rust, blue and black tweed suit was £950, sale price £650; Donna Karan dark camel fitted jacket was £1,180, sale price £600 (matching skirt was £425, sale price £230); men's Donna Karan wool suit was £720, sale price £505.

☐ **Burberry**
18-22 Haymarket, London SW1; 165 Regent Street, London W1 (inquiries 0171-930 3343). From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items. Women's trench coats were £495, now £285; men's flyfront raincoats were £395, now £235; men's double breasted blazers were £295, now £175; women's blazers were £210, now £175; women's cashmere overcoats were £795, now £550; men's cashmere overcoats were £895, now £550; silk scarves were £85, now £49.50; umbrellas were £52.50, now £32.50.

☐ **Caroline Charles**
56-57 Beauchamp Place, London SW3; 170 New Bond Street, London W1; 9 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8; 25 High Street, Old Amersham, Buckinghamshire (inquiries 0171-225 3197). From Jan 2.
30-50 per cent reductions on autumn/winter collection. Wool crêpe dresses and suits in black, plum or petrol blue discounted by 30 per cent; chocolate brown crêpe evening dress was £541, sale price £270; printed velvet jacket was £510, sale price £250; leopard print and patent boots were £195, sale price £99; mongolian lamb scarves were £58, sale price £29; leather gloves with fake fur cuffs were £75, sale price £45.

☐ **Catherine Walker**
Chelsea Design Company, 65 Sydney Street, London SW3 (0171-352 4626). From Jan 10.
Up to 50 per cent off selected pieces from the day and eveningwear collections for autumn/winter.

☐ **Chanel**
26 Old Bond Street, London, W1 and 31 Sloane Street, London SW1 (inquiries 0171-493 5040). From Jan 6-13.
30 per cent off autumn/winter ready-to-wear collection and a selection of accessories.

☐ **Christian Lacroix**
8a Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-235 2400) and 29 Old Bond Street, London W1 (0171-409 1994). Sale now on.
30 per cent off Christian Lacroix main line, 40 per cent off the Bazar diffusion collection.

☐ **Cox & Power**
95 Walton Street, London SW3 (0171-589 6335). Mail-order catalogue available From Jan 2.
Specially designed jewellery gift worth £100 on all purchases over £500 during January.

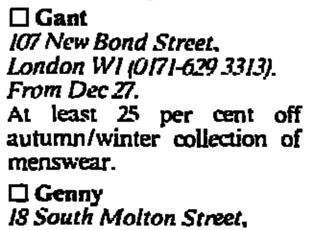
☐ **Dolce & Gabbana**
175 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-235 0335). From Dec 27.
30 per cent off autumn/winter collection, including women's suits at £539 (previously £770); men's suits £455 (previously £650).

☐ **Emma Hope**
33 Amwell Street, London EC1 (0171-833 2367). From Jan 6.
40 per cent off most shoes and boots.

☐ **Ermenegildo Zegna**
37 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 4471) and 42 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2 (0171-497 0001). Inquiries: 0171-639 7088. From Jan 2.
Substantial discounts on designer menswear, including suits from £595 down to £429; jackets from £450 from £329; trousers for £150, from £99; shirts were £75, sale price £59; ties from £10.

☐ **Escada**
67 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-629 0934); 35a George Street, Edinburgh (0131-225 9885); 44-46 James Street, Harrogate (01423 500497). From Dec 27.
30-50 per cent off all stock.

☐ **G Gigli**
38 South Molton Street, London W1 (0171-629 0666). From Dec 27.
Substantial discounts on men's and women's autumn/winter collection. Men's brown corduroy self stripe suit was £480, sale price £240; men's off-white dandy collar shirt was £70, sale price £45; women's blue wool fitted jacket was £260, sale price £185; matching high waisted trousers were £95, sale price £65; women's deep red long-collared fitted shirt was £70, sale price £45.



☐ **Gant**
107 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-629 3313). From Dec 27.
At least 25 per cent off autumn/winter collection of menswear.

☐ **Genny**
18 South Molton Street, London W1 (0171-629 1080). From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items. Blue wool bouclé suit was £810, sale price £405; black jersey suit was £765, sale price £385; long blue or black cashmere/wool blend coat was £750, sale price £400.

☐ **Georgina Von Etzdorf**
50 Burlington Arcade, London W1 and 149 Sloane Street, London SW1 (inquiries 0171-232 6625). From Jan 3.
Up to 30 per cent off assorted Rayon velvet scarves, shawls and waistcoats.

☐ **Gianfranco Ferre Ladieswear**
29 Sloane Street, London, SW1 (0171-838 9576). From Jan 4.
Substantial discounts on autumn/winter collection. Velvet evening suit with diamanté button was £3,360, sale price £2,335; Prince of Wales check wool skirt suit was £2,100, sale price £1,470.

☐ **Gieves & Hawkes**
No 1 Savile Row, London W1 (inquiries: 0171-434 2001); 20 Old Bond Street, Bath, Avon; 2 Queens Circus, Montpellier, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire; 1-7 St Michael's Row, Chester; 22 The Hard, Portsmouth, Hants; 1/2 The Square, Winchester. From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off menswear. Pure wool suits were £495, sale price £245; pure wool suits were £950, sale price £475 (Savile Row only); pure wool blazers were £295, sale price £195; wool and cashmere overcoats were £375, sale price £295; cotton business shirts were £59, sale price £35; silk ties were £49, sale price £20; suede brogues were £250, sale price £125 (Savile Row only); leather lace-up boots were £190, sale price £95 (Savile Row only); up to 50 per cent reduction on selected casualwear.

☐ **Hermès**
155 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-499 8856) and 179 Sloane Street, London SW3 (0171-823 1014). Inquiries: 0171-259 5191. From Jan 6-13.
40 per cent off most ready-to-wear, with some fragrances included in the sale. Men's suede clipper jacket was £1,550, sale price £930; women's Montana blue coat was £1,540, sale price £925; 100 per cent cashmere Hermès orange classic jacket was £1,700, sale price £1,020; ladies' suit with shawl was £1,760, sale price £1,056; ladies' classic black suit was £1,720, sale price £1,032.

☐ **J&M Davidson**
62 Ledbury Road, London, W11 (0171-243 2089). From Jan 2.
40-50 per cent off selected merchandise, including belts, fabric by the metre, leather and suede bags, knitwear, outerwear and selected bed linen. Classic twinset top was £90, now £45; classic twinset cardigan was £115, now £58.

☐ **Jaeger & Jaeger Menswear**
200-206 Regent Street, London W1 and 163 Sloane Street, London SW1 and branches (0171-200 4000). From Dec 27. (Preview Dec 20.)
20-50 per cent reductions on many lines, including 40 per cent off men's knitwear; 30 per cent off men's formal attire; and 40 per cent off men's formal shirts.

☐ **Jil Sander**
26 South Molton Street, London W1 (0171-491 7833). From Jan 4.
Substantial discounts on autumn/winter collection. Wool crepe A-line skirt was £385, sale price £235; herringbone coat was £1,515, sale price £1,065; taupe wool skirt suit was £1,155, sale price £810; satin round-neck long-sleeved evening tunic in cream, navy or grey was £220, reduced to £135.

☐ **Joseph**
77 Fulham Road, London SW3; 26 Sloane Street, London SW1; 16 Sloane Street, London SW1; 28 Brook Street, London W1; 23 Old Bond Street W1; 21 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8. (Inquiries 0171-736 2522). From Dec 27.
At least 30 per cent off autumn/winter collection.

☐ **Karl Lagerfeld**
173 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 6277). Sale now on.
40-60 per cent off autumn/winter collection, including women's trouser suits reduced from £495 to £297.

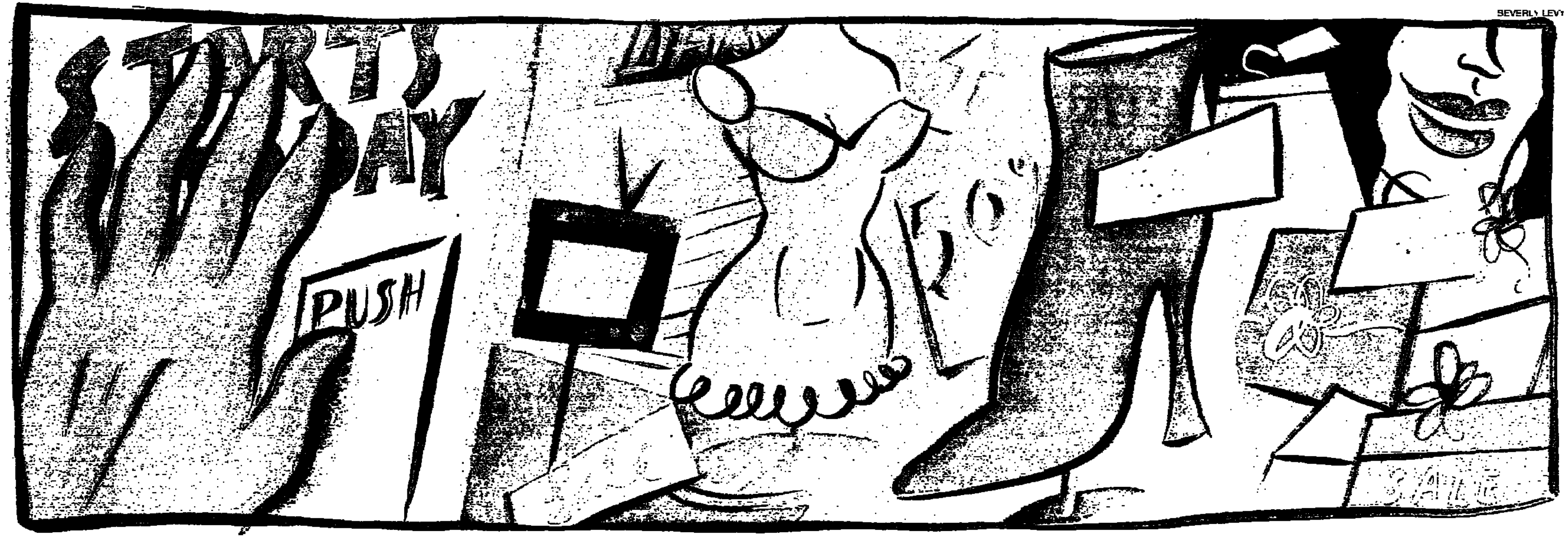
☐ **Katharine Hamnett**
20 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-935 3556). From Dec 28-Jan 6 (then closed for refurbishment until Jan 29).
Most stock reduced by 30 per cent initially, then reductions of 50 per cent and 70 per cent as the sale progresses. Women's wool jacket reduced from £335 to £165; trousers from £135 to £67.50.

هكذا من الأصل

JANUARY SALES

... from designer labels to tables. When push comes to shove, **Karen Kay** has an eye for the best buys

BEVERLY LEVY



☐ Kingshill Mail Order
For copies of the Kingshill British designer Collections catalogue and Diffusion catalogue (£7.50 and £3.50 respectively) call 01494 890555, or fax 01494 866003. Sale from Jan 1.
Half-price designer clothing and accessories, including Jasper Conran, Nicole Farhi, Caroline Charles, Paul Costelloe, Amanda Wakeley and Jaeger London.

☐ Laura Ashley
Branches nationwide: ring 01686 622116 for details. From Dec 27. Preview for account customers 8.30-10.30am on first day; Brent Cross 10-11.30am. Scotland: sale starts Boxing Day. Preview for account customers 10am-noon on first day.
20-50 per cent discount on selected items.

☐ Manolo Blahnik
49-51 Old Church Street, London SW3 (0171-352 8622). From Jan 12.
At least 45 per cent off selected lines, including some shoes for £50 per pair.

☐ Margaret Howell
29 Beauchamp Place, London SW3 and 24 Brook Street, London W1 (inquiries 0171-627 5587). From Dec 27. Preview Dec 23.
More than 30 per cent off autumn/winter collection.

☐ Maxmara
149 New Bond Street, London W1 and 32 Sloane Street, London SW1 (inquiries 0171-297 3434). From Jan 2-end of Jan.
More than 30 per cent off autumn/winter collection.

☐ Mulberry
11-12 Gees Court, London W1 (0171-493 1500); 185 Brompton Road, London SW1 (0171-225 1013) and 23-25 Swinegate, York (01904 611055). For in-store concessions, see relevant department stores. From Dec 27.
Up to 40 per cent off selected items. Men's watersilk ski jackets reduced by 40 per cent: Scotchgrain Clipper bags from £105; selected leather bags reduced by up to one third: most women's ready-to-wear reduced by one third.

☐ N Peal
54, 37 and 71 Burlington Arcade, London W1; 192 Piccadilly, London W1 (inquiries 0171-493 9220). Sale now on at 54 Burlington Arcade; other branches from Jan 4.
30-50 per cent discount on autumn/winter cashmere fashion collection, including twinsets, tunics, wraps, rollnecks and crewnecks.

☐ Next
Branches nationwide. For nearest shop ring 0116 2849424. From Dec 27.
Autumn/winter stock reduced by up to 50 per cent.

☐ Oasis
292 Regent Street, London W1; 13 St James's Street, London WC2 and branches (inquiries 0171-323 5978). From Dec 27-end of Jan. Scotland: from Boxing Day.
30-50 per cent off selected items.

☐ Oilily
9 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-823 2505) and 24 Church Alley, Liverpool (0151-708 9236). From Dec 28.
30-50 per cent discounts on all womenswear and childrenswear including the new Xiloy womenswear collection.

☐ Patrick Cox
8 Symons Street, London SW3 (0171-730 6504). From Jan 2.
20 per cent off all men's and women's shoes.

☐ Paul Smith
40-44 Floral Street, London WC2 (0171-379 7133). 9-11 Langley Court, London WC2 (0171-836 7828). From Jan 13.
30-50 per cent off all stock.

☐ Philippa Lepley Bridalwear
494 Fulham Road, London SW6 (0171-386 0927). From Jan 6.
Substantial discounts on selected bridalwear, including wedding gowns reduced from £3,000 to £500 and velvet suits reduced from £700 to £420.

☐ Polo Ralph Lauren
143 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-491 4967). From Jan 6.
30-50 per cent off autumn/winter collection for men, women and boys.

☐ Principles
419 Oxford Street, London W1 and branches nationwide (inquiries 0171-927 1443). From Dec 27. Scotland: from Boxing Day.
At least 25 per cent off most lines.

☐ Richard James
31 Savile Row, London W1 (0171-434 0605). From Jan 13.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items.

☐ Romeo Gigli
62 South Molton Street, London W1 (0171-495 6730). From Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items from autumn/winter collections for men and women. Full-length double-breasted women's coat with fur collar reduced from £1,025 to £515: women's black or petrol velvet corduroy trouser suit was £815, sale price £410; cotton fitted long-collared shirt with jewelled cufflinks down from £305 to £155; selection of brocade fitted waistcoasts reduced to £155 from £310; men's four-button suit in navy/black/grey or stripes reduced to £350 from £700.

☐ Ronit Zilkha
187 Brompton Road, London SW3 (0171-823 8415); 34 Brook Street, London W1 (0171-499 3707); 70 Hampstead High Street, London NW3 (0171-431 0253). From Dec 27.
30-50 per cent off autumn/winter collection. Cashmere and wool knee-length coat with Peter Pan collar reduced to £149 from £399.

☐ S Fisher
22-23 Burlington Arcade, London W1 (0171-493 4180). From Dec 27.
Up to 40 per cent off selected garments, including John Smedley polo shirts, rollnecks and V-necks in assorted colours.

☐ Scotch House
2 Brompton Road, London SW1; 84-86 Regent Street, London W1 and 64 Buchanan Street, Glasgow (inquiries 0171-581 2151). From Dec 27.
30-40 per cent off selected stock. Women's lambswool sweaters reduced from £79.50 to £45; women's cashmere crewnecks down from £175 to £129; men's cashmere V-necks now £169, were £235.

☐ Simpson
Piccadilly, London W1 (0171-734 2002). From Dec 27-Jan 27.
25-50 per cent off selected merchandise, including DAKS women's jackets reduced to £159 (from £229); Betty Barclay jackets were £159, sale price £99; Louise Kennedy women's trousers were £199, sale price £139; Men's DAKS suits were £299, sale price £149; Simpson men's raincoats were £199, sale price £99: men's merino knitwear was £79, sale price £39; DAKS men's shirts were £69, sale price £34.50; 30 per cent off selected lines from Kurt Geiger and Ferragamo shoes.

☐ Swaine Adeney Brigg
10 Old Bond Street, London W1 (0171-409 7277). From Dec 30.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items, including 30 per cent off women's and menswear; 20 per cent off certain ranges of the Brigg umbrella; various leather items reduced by up to 50 per cent.

☐ Thomas Pink
London: 85 Jermyn Street, SW1; 35 Dover Street, W1; 16 Blomfield Street, EC2; 16 Cullum Street, EC3; 44 Bow Lane, EC4; 82 Chancery Lane, WC2; Drayton Gardens, SW10; Cabot Place East, Canary Wharf, E14; 32 Castle Street, Edinburgh (inquiries: 0171-498 2202). Sale starts Jermyn Street, Drayton Gardens and Church Street, Edinburgh from Boxing Day; all other stores from Dec 27. Sale ends Jan 20.
Up to 50 per cent off selected merchandise.

☐ Timberland
72 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-935 2139). From Dec 27.
Up to 40 per cent off selected stock. Men's leather jackets were £650, sale price £455; men's footwear reduced by up to 25 per cent; women's footwear by up to 30 per cent; men's clothing reduced by up to 30 per cent; women's clothing by up to 40 per cent.

☐ Valentino
173-174 Sloane Street, London SW1 and 160 New Bond Street, London W1 (inquiries: 0171-493 2698). Sale now on.
40-60 per cent off autumn/winter collection for women. Men's collection available at Sloane Street, reduced by around 30 per cent. Cocktail dress with feather trim was £860, now £516; men's suit was £540, now £378.

☐ Van Peterson
194-196 Walton Street, London SW3 (0171-584 1101). Mail order available. From last week of Jan for two weeks.
Reductions on selected jewellery.

☐ Versace
34-36 Old Bond Street, London W1 (0171-499 1862) and the Italian Centre, Glasgow (0141-552 6510). From Jan 4.
30 per cent off selected items.

☐ Versus by Versace
92 Brompton Road, London SW3 (0171-581 8407). From Jan 4.
30 per cent off selected stock.

☐ Wannabe by Patrick Cox
129 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-730 8886). From Jan 2.
50 per cent off all clothing, 20 per cent off selected shoes and accessories. NB: classic styles, including python/mock crocodile, are not in the sale.

☐ Warehouse
22-24 Argyle Street, London W1 (0171-278 3491) and branches nationwide. Ring 0181-910 1400 for details. From Christmas Eve.
Up to one third off selected merchandise.

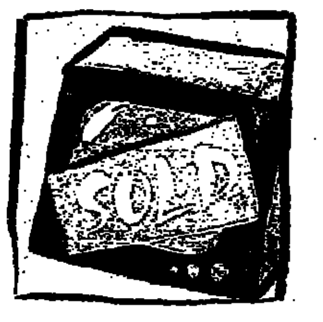
☐ Yves St Laurent Rive Gauche
137 New Bond Street, London W1 (womenswear): 135 New Bond Street, London W1 (menswear); and 33 Sloane Street, London SW1 (men's and womenswear). Inquiries 0171-235 6706. From Dec 27.
40 per cent off all stock, including silk velvet evening jackets (various colours) reduced from £865 to £520 and tailored wool jackets down from £1,065 to £639.

HOMES & INTERIORS

☐ Bridgewater / Matthew Rice
Shop address: 739 Fulham Road, London SW6. Sale will be held at alternative venue. Ring 0171-371 9077 for details. From Jan 10-27.
Bridgewater pottery, linens and cookware: up to 40 per cent off seconds. Matthew Rice giftware stationery, half price or less on discontinued lines. Handpainted dinner services comprising tureen, gravy boat and stand, two oval platters, two serving bowls, eight soup plates, eight 6½in plates, eight 8½in plates, eight 10½in plates, eight cereal bowls (while stocks last), normal price £784.10, sale price £425; Black Salmon dinner service (comprising same as before) down to £999, from £1,905.70; Matthew Rice large frames and A5 notebooks reduced from £9.95 to £4.95 (or three for £12.50); notecards were £3.95 per pack, sale price £1.95 (or three for £4.95).

☐ The Conran Shop
Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-589 7401). From Jan 6-21.
Bargains throughout the store. Plus two warehouse sales of furniture at half price and less at Unit 16, Merton Park Estate, Lee Road, London, SW16, Jan 6 and 7, (Sat 10am-6.30pm, Sun 10am-4pm). Courtesy bus between store and warehouse.

☐ C.P. Hart
Newham Terrace, Hercules Road, London SE1 (0171-902 1000). From Jan 13-Feb 3.
Reductions on factory seconds and warehouse clearance stock, including classic cast-iron rolltop baths at £305.50 — an extra 5 per cent discount for anyone who takes purchases away with them.



☐ Damask
3-4 Broxholme House, New King's Road, London SW6 (0171-731 3553). From Jan 10-31.
25-50 per cent discount on selected lines, including women's nightwear reduced from £50-60 to about £30.

☐ Descamps
197 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-235 6957). Also on sale at Liberty, Regent Street, London W1. From Dec 27-Jan 27.
Substantial reductions on spring/summer 1995 collection of bedlinens, towels and bathrobes, as well as a selection of lingerie and nightwear. Berbere kimono hooded bathrobe was £112, sale price £79; Jonquille pillowcases reduced from £18.90 to £12.60; Fidji hand towels were £19.90, sale price £13.50.

☐ Designers Guild
267 and 277 King's Road, London SW3 (0171-351 5775). From Jan 6-20.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items including printed, colour woven, appliqué and embroidered bedlinen, 20-50 per cent off upholstered furniture; up to 50 per cent off a wide selection of brightly coloured cushions: rugs, tableware, and glassware reduced by up to 50 per cent.

Designers Guild Warehouse Sale: *6 Relay Road, Ariel Way, off Wood Lane, London W12 (0171-243 7300). From Jan 13-21.*
Big reductions on fabric and wallpaper.

☐ The General Trading Company
144 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-730 0411); 10 Argyle Street, Bath, Avon (01225 461507): 24 Dyer Street, Cirencester, Wiltshire (01285 652314). London: from Jan 6 for three weeks; Bath and Cirencester: Dec 27-Jan 27.
Up to 30 per cent off selected merchandise. Selected cushions were £52.10, sale price £36.47; vegetable design platters were £59, sale price £41.30; selected quilted cotton bedspreads were £180, sale price £135; Beau Box pyjamas were £45, sale price £36; Kelim stools were £640, sale price £500; distressed wooden photo frames were £24.50: sale price £19.60; 10 per cent off all handstitched needlepoint cushions; £30 off handpainted and découpage firescreens.

☐ Habitat
Stores nationwide. Ring 0645 334433 for nearest branch. From Dec 27-Jan 28.
Up to 50 per cent off selected stock. Emba rubberwood seat was £49, now £34.30; solid beech table was £399, now £279; maple table was £249, now £199; Boundry bedroom furniture discounted by 20 per cent; Garrick sofa was £949, now £759, matching armchair was £499, now £399; Sierra dinner service reduced by 50 per cent.

☐ Heal's
196 Tottenham Court Road, London W1; 234 King's Road, London SW3; and Tunsgate, Guildford, Surrey (inquiries 0171-636 1666). From Dec 27-Jan 21.
10-50 per cent off selected home furnishings. Heal's Avon handmade beds reduced from £2,495 to £1,870; Tivoli oak dining table down from £895 to £779; Ariel beech cabinet on wheels formerly £695; sale price £559: Rio wall lamp was £85, sale price £42.50; Yuli sofa in natural lacquered rattan reduced from £550 to £325.

☐ The Holding Company
243-245 King's Road, London SW3 (0171-352 1600). From Dec 27.
10-30 per cent off selected stock.

☐ Jane Churchill
151 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-730 9847); 3a Christopher Place, St Albans (01727 860293): 13 Fitzroy Street, Cambridge (01223 323211). From Dec 28.
Greatly reduced discontinued and seconds fabrics, remnants and wallpapers. Big discounts on display furniture and decorative accessories.
Plus: warehouse clearance sale at the Royal Horticultural Society's Old Hall, 80 Vincent Square, London SW1. For information call 0171-493 2231. Jan 19, 10am-6pm, and Jan 20, 10am-3pm.
Bolts of discontinued and slightly imperfect chintzes, linens and wovens. Remaindered batches of wallpaper plus a wide selection of remnants and decorative accessories.

☐ Jerry's Home Store
163 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-581 0909); 57 Heath Street, Hampstead, London NW3 (0171-794 8622); The Bentall Centre, Kingston, southwest London (0181-549 5393); and Home on Four, Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1 (0171-245 6251). From Jan 9 for seven weeks.
Up to one third off selected stock. White porcelain dinner plates for £3.25; classic Gibraltar glasses for £2.25; white rag rugs for £5.95.

☐ The Monogrammed Linen Shop
168 Walton Street, London, SW3 (0171-589 4033). From Jan 2.
Up to 50 per cent off selected stock. 25 per cent off Pierre Frey Gonesse bedlinen in white or blue, single duvet covers were £79, sale price £59.25; 100 per cent cotton sheet sets and duvet covers in plain pastel colours at half price, single sheet sale price £7, pillow case sale price £8.47; all valences to match plain dyed pastel bedlinen on sale at £15 (normal prices: single, £58, queen, £66.50, king, £72); single thick pique cotton bedspread in floral or geometric pattern was £79, sale price £59.25.

☐ Paperchase
213 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (0171-580 8496). From Dec 27.
All Christmas stock reduced by 25 per cent.

☐ Purves & Purves
80-81 & 83 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (0171-580 8223). From Dec 27-Jan 27.
Up to 50 per cent off selected stock. Up to 40 per cent off ex-display furniture; 10 per cent off any single item over £500; 50 per cent off discontinued lines of accessories.

☐ Simon Horn Furniture
117-121 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW6 (0171-731 1279). From Jan 2-27.
Substantial reductions on quality beds and furniture. The Chatsworth bed (5ft 3in x 6ft 6in) was £3,520, sale price £2,358; £1,000 reduction on rosewood plain or panelled Lit Bateau, eg, 5ft 3in bed was £2,875, sale price £1,875; Louis XVI rosewood caned bed was £2,281, sale price £1,710; 30 per cent off occasional, solid cherrywood furniture, eg, small drinks table was £890, sale price £623; selected bedside tables reduced by 20 per cent; general discount of 10 per cent on all stock items.

☐ Smallbone of Devizes
Showrooms in London, Tunbridge Wells, Leamington Spa, Harrogate and Devizes. Call 0171-589 5998 for nearest showroom. From Dec 27.
Substantial discounts on all hand-made furniture for kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms. Signature kitchen styles such as Unfitted, Painted Pilaster, Inlay and Classical reduced.

☐ Tridias Toys
124 Walcot Street, Bath, Avon and five other stores. For details or a free mail-order catalogue ring 01225 469455. From Jan 1-Feb 14.
10-50 per cent off selected items. Marionette Theatre was £17.99, sale price £12.99: Marionettes were £14.99, sale price £10.99; Wooden Timba game was £9.95, sale price £6.99; p&p for sale items reduced to £1.95.

☐ Yves Delorme
Available through Yves Delorme shops in selected House of Fraser stores nationwide and on 3rd floor, Liberty, London, W1. For your nearest shop ring 01296 394980. From Dec 27-Jan 27.
25 per cent off all Yves Delorme Collection designs discontinued for 1996. Frou-Frou bedlinen by Christian Lacroix, double duvet cover was £82, sale price £61.50: pillowcase was £29, sale price £21.75; and double sheet was £66.75, sale price £50: Christian Lacroix Folklore towelling robe with embroidered cuffs was £108, sale price £81; green Jubilee ribbons and bows design double duvet cover was £64.75, sale price £48.50; pillowcase was £10.35, sale price £7.75.

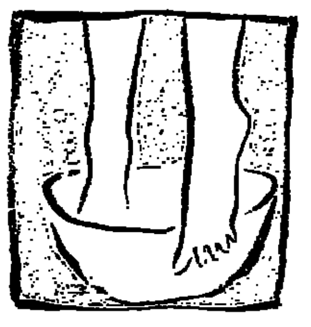
SPORTS & LEISURE

☐ Karrimor
3 Southampton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2 (0171-497 0716). From Dec 27.
10-15 per cent off selected items. Waterproof jackets down from £199 to £169; fleece pullovers reduced from £69.99 to £59.99.

☐ Snow & Rock
188 Kensington High Street, London W8 (0171-937 0872); 150 Holborn, London EC1 (0171-831 6900); 14 Priory Queensway, Birmingham (0121-236 8280); Hemel Ski Centre, St Albans Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts (01442 235305); 99 Fordwater Road, Chertsey, Surrey (01932 569569) and Sheffield Ski Village, Vale Road, Parkwood Springs, Sheffield (01142 769459). From Dec 27.
Many items substantially reduced. 10 per cent off all accessories and ski boots.

● *Information correct at time of going to press. Dates and reductions may change at short notice. Please check with specific shops before making a special trip.*

☐ On Boxing Day in *The Times*: a selected Sales Guide.



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Sunny isles for second homes

Dreaming of a warm place by the sea? Some suggestions for buying abroad

At this time of year, many Britons indulge their dreams of owning a second home in a part of the globe where they can enjoy winter sunshine.

Tenerife is the largest of Spain's Canary Islands, and the most popular with northern Europeans seeking a holiday home. The island lies in the Atlantic off Africa's shoulder, and can rightly claim to be in the warmest part of Europe. It is split in two by the 12,000ft Mount Teide, which creates two distinct property markets. The north has rain, luxuriant greenery, historic villas and high prices; the south has year-round sunshine, high-rise concrete apartments and some of the cheapest property.

Until recently, the island's property market was dominated by the British. Now, Germans, Italians, Dutch and, increasingly, Russians are paying up to £300,000 for homes there. Tenerife property prices peaked in the late 1980s, fell back, and are rising again. One-bedroom flats in modern purpose-built blocks with swimming-pools and communal gardens in resorts such as Playa de las Americas fetch from £25,000. Those with two or three bedrooms cost from £30,000 to £60,000. Detached villas start at £120,000.

One of the latest developments is the Marazul Golf & Country Club on the island's less developed west coast, where an 18-hole golf course is being built on a 400 acre former banana plantation. A new three-bedroom farmhouse by the fairways with a pool is around £250,000. A larger country house with 1.5 acres, a pool and exotic gardens surrounded by banana groves, starts at £300,000.

British buyers tend to go for traditional farmhouses and rustic village houses. Prices drop as you move inland. You might buy a half-acre building plot with a shell of a farmhouse for around £35,000.

Land prices are rising fast on the tiny neighbouring island of **Gomera**, where a new airport is due for completion next year. An old farmhouse on half an acre can still fetch as little as £15,000.

Buying costs include IGIC (local VAT) at 4 per cent on buildings and 10 per cent on land, plus transfer charges of around two per cent. When buying property in Tenerife, as elsewhere, it is wise to engage an independent solicitor to protect your interests.

Many Britons own a second home in **Cyprus**, in the Greek-Cypriot controlled south. Here, people drive on the left, have red telephone boxes and nearly everyone speaks English. With 340 days of sunshine a year, a sea temperature that never drops below 16C, cool mountains and sandy beaches, the island has much to offer. The crime rate is low and the cost of living — including property — is among the cheapest in Europe. However, foreigners are not allowed to let their property in Cyprus.

There are also restrictions on the amount of land that foreigners can buy: around two *donums*, almost an acre. However, there are plenty of derelict houses in lemon groves for under £30,000, although you can expect to pay the same again in modernisation costs.

Around Paphos, in the southeast, building density is minimal. Paphos is a picturesque harbour town, with some of the best beaches in the area and the Troödos mountains near by. A few miles along the coast, a new studio flat in Coral Bay Village, a low-rise development in subtropical landscaped gardens, with swimming-pool and tennis courts, will cost around £32,630. Two-bedroom flats are from £62,270, and terraced villas, with gardens and sea views, from £71,370.

Re-sale property is cheaper. A small second-hand flat in Paphos might be as little as £20,000, or even less in Larnaca and Limassol. Larger two-bedroom flats start at £40,000, and detached villas from £100,000.

In the foothills of the Troödos mountains, close to the village of Konia, a local developer, Cybarco, is offering villa plots from £33,280. A detached three-bedroom, two-bathroom villa, with views of the sea and mountains, will cost around £115,700, including land.

Securing proper title to a newly built property can take a long time. Before the Land Registry will issue title on a new home, the developer is obliged to complete everything from roads to leisure facilities. If you are planning to buy, lodge a copy of the developer's contract with the Registry at the outset. Some developers issue bank guarantees which compensate you if your deeds fail to materialise.

Island in the sun: A £735,000 house overlooking the golf course on the Royal Westmoreland development in Barbados. Prices start at £255,000

Despite the hurricanes, the Caribbean islands remain popular with well-heeled British buyers. **Barbados** is the most expensive. The smartest houses cost £1 million or more along the west coast. As well as the perfect climate and friendly people, the 166 square mile coral island, fringed by some of the finest beaches in the Caribbean, has much to offer. It is a civilised community with around 7,500 British expatriates. The property market is stable, although prices are rising as building land becomes scarcer.

Royal Westmoreland, the most exclusive holiday-home development on Barbados, has been created within 480 acres of former sugar plantation, a mile inland from the west coast. The British-owned development includes 350 luxury houses, which are being built around an 18-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Jnr. Another nine holes are planned, and 22 of the properties have been sold prior to completion, mainly to English buyers.

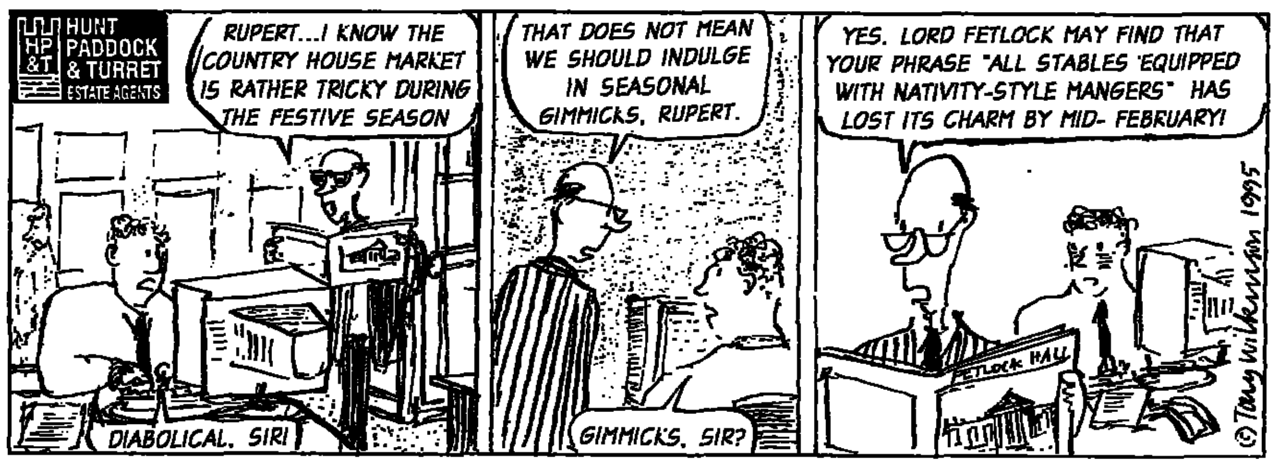
Prices start at £255,000 for a two-bedroom villa close to the club house, with sun terraces and sea views. The detached courtyard villas, from £400,000, have three bedrooms, marble floors, coral stone walls, a private pool and landscaped gardens.

There are also larger, two-storey colonial-style houses, set in half an acre overlooking the fairways. Built around leafy courtyards, and having up to five bedrooms and a guest cottage, these cost from £525,000 to £800,000.

There is a 10 per cent property tax on buying, plus stamp duty and lawyers' fees of around 2 per cent. However, because of a government concession, property tax is not levied on the purchases at Royal Westmoreland.

CHERYL TAYLOR

- *Marazul Golf & Country Club — Tenerife (00 3 422 865890). Cybarco — Cyprus (0171-436 3881). MED Properties — Cyprus (01530 260060). Royal Westmoreland — Barbados (0171-355 5028).*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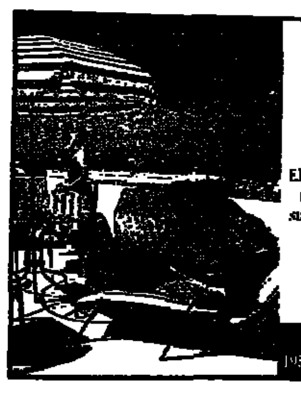

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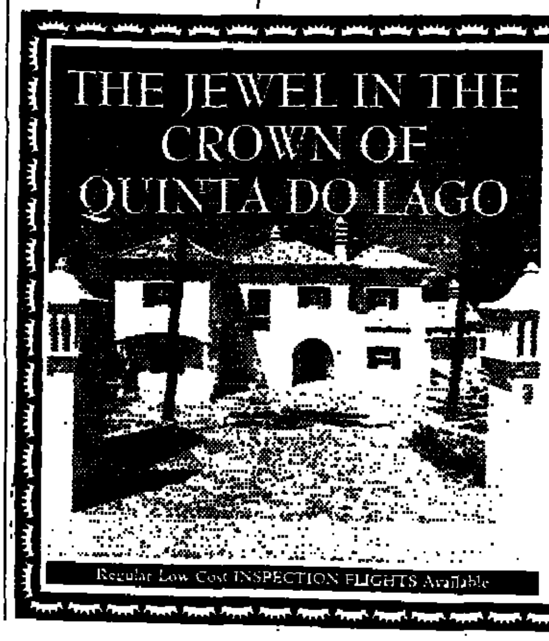
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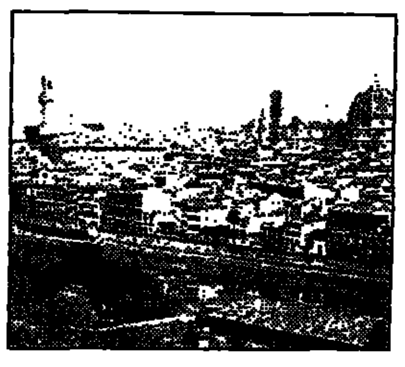
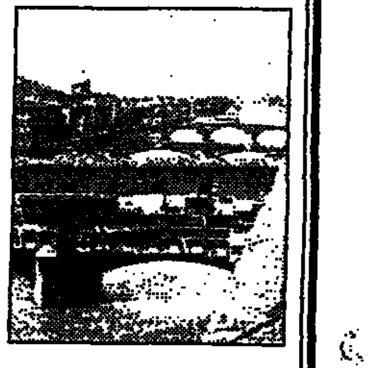
ITALIAN CITY BREAKS

A WEEKEND IN FLORENCE
3 NIGHTS FROM JUST £259
DEPARTURES IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1996

Stretching along the banks of the River Arno and overlooked by the Tuscan hills, Florence offers a wealth of architecture from the Renaissance period. Visit the Uffizi Gallery and many other museums which display masterpieces by da Vinci, Michelangelo and Botticelli. Alternatively, cross the ancient Ponte Vecchio and explore the most authentic quarter of this city or relax and browse through the many shops and boutiques around the piazzas. Optional excursions take you through the Tuscan countryside and Chianti vineyards to medieval Siena and San Gimignano.





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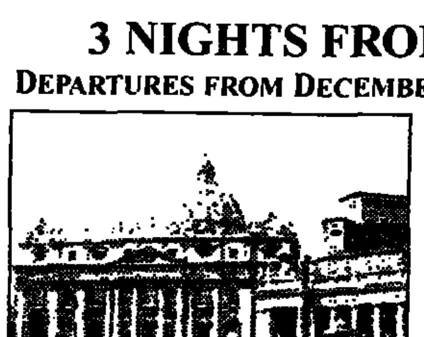

Museums and monuments spanning over 2,000 years of history make this a superb weekend break in Italy's capital. There are so many architectural sights to discover including the ancient Roman Colosseum and Forum, the Vatican City and St Peter's Square. Visit Michelangelo's fresco in the Sistine Chapel and admire the view from the top of the Spanish Steps. Alternatively, browse in the exclusive designer shops along the Via Condotti or stroll through the gardens of the Villa Borghese to escape the bustle of city life. Optional excursions include a visit to the Frascati vineyards, a classical tour of the city or a chance to explore Rome by night.

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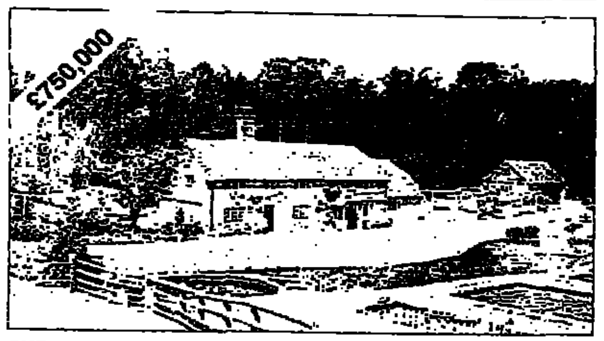

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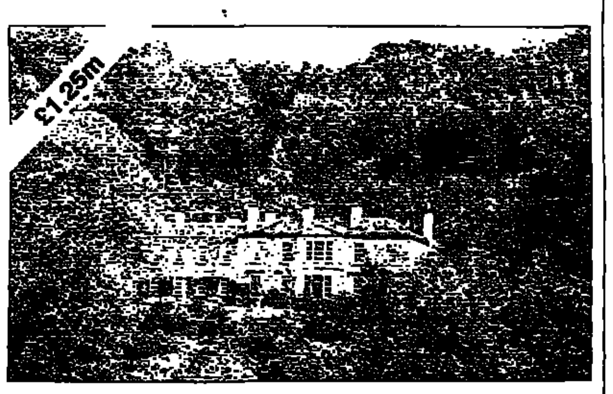
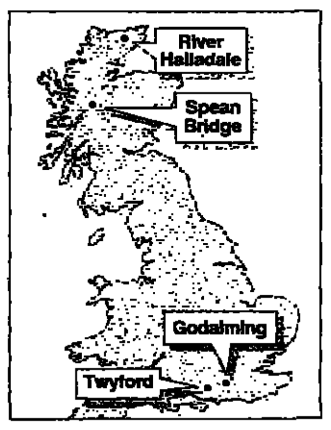
Silkmill Cottage, Warrenmere, Thursley, Near Godalming. Period farmhouse with attached fish farm, in its own nine-acre valley with spring-fed ponds, adjoining common land and Thursley nature reserve. Four bedrooms, two bathrooms (one en suite), study, drawing room, sitting room, farmhouse kitchen, dining area, utility room and cloakroom. Two barns. About £750,000 (Hamptons, 0171-493 8222).

SUTHERLAND
The River Halladale, Strath Halladale. The salmon fishing on the entire river Halladale. Five year average 312 salmon. Sweep netting nghts. Deer stalking, grouse shooting and loch fishing. Main house with six bedrooms, four bathrooms, three reception rooms and staff flat. Second house with six bedrooms and four bathrooms. Two service cottages, working hatchery and deer larder. About £1.85m (Knight, Frank & Rutley, 0131-225 8171).

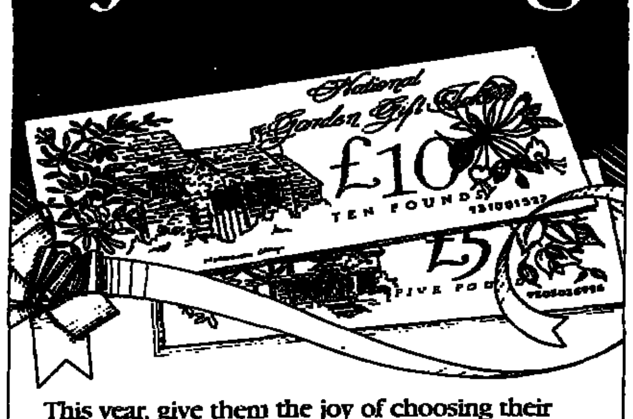
HAMPSHIRE
Appletree House, Twyford. Newly built country house in old walled garden of a country house estate on the banks of the River Itchen with 450 yards of double and single bank fishing, in 9.75 acres. Four bedroom suites, three reception rooms, kitchen/family room, conservatory, study, utility and vinery. Self-contained one bedroom guest suite. Secondary house with three bedrooms and two bathrooms, two reception rooms, kitchen and utility. About £825,000 (John D. Wood, 01962 863131).





INVERNESS-SHIRE
Glenfintaig Estate, Spean Bridge. Residential and sporting estate in 2,133 acres overlooking Loch Lochy, with salmon and sea trout fishing, boat house and launching ramp. Glenfintaig House with seven bedrooms, five bathrooms, sauna, four reception rooms, kitchen and laundry. In-hand farm of 1,489 acres. Rough shooting and deer-stalking. About £1.25 million (Strutt & Parker, 0131-226 2500).

CHERYL TAYLOR



Give the joy of choosing

This year, give them the joy of choosing their own presents.

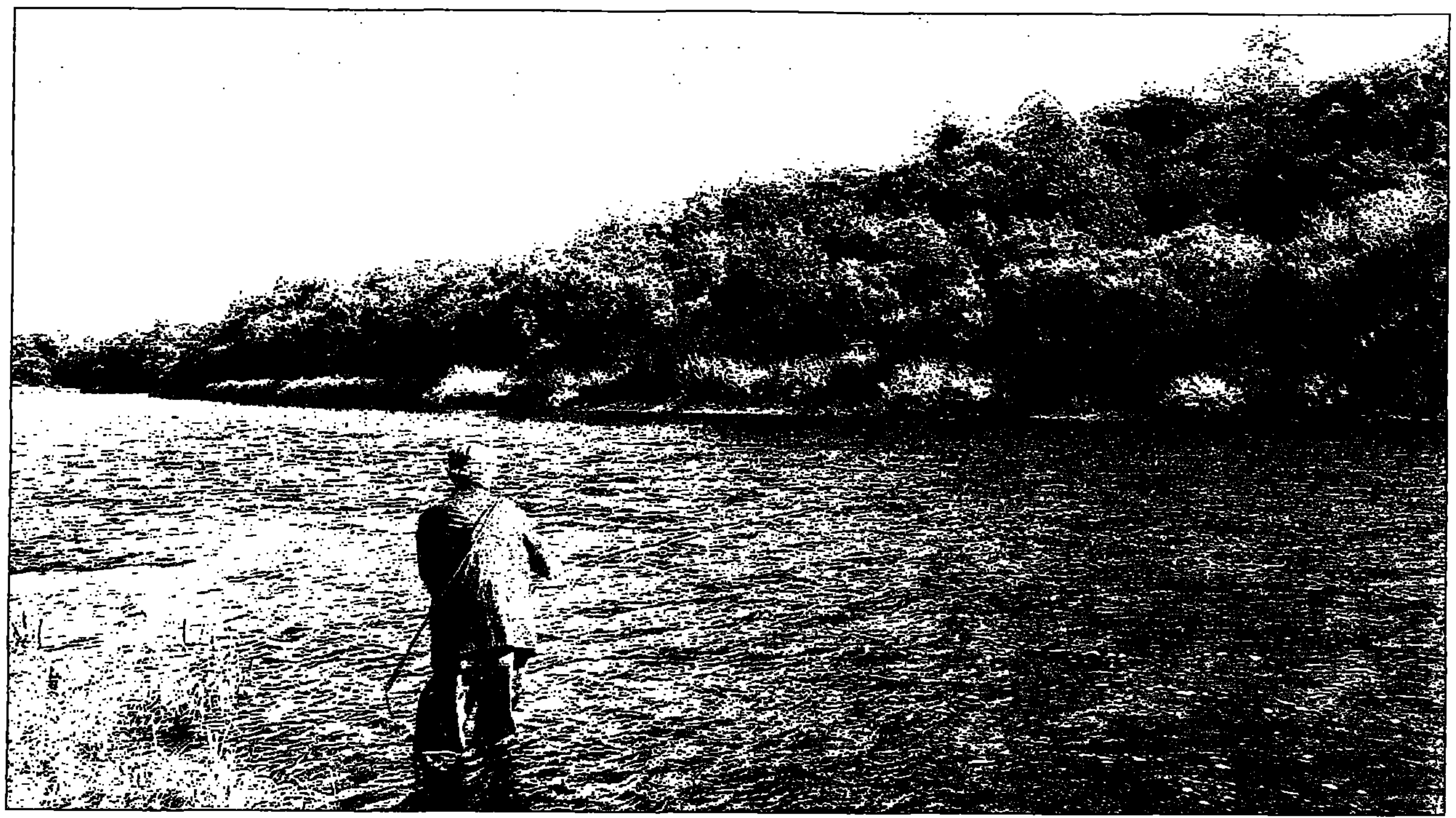
National Garden Gift Tokens make delightful gifts. Ranging from £1 to £20, these colourful tokens can be bought and exchanged for a huge variety of plants and other gardening items at most Garden Centres, Garden Shops and Nurseries right across the UK.

So give real joy this Christmas, give the gift that grows.

NATIONAL GARDEN GIFT TOKENS

Issued only by members of the Horticultural Trades Association

Buying a rod on a salmon or trout river is not cheap, but prices are falling, says **Brian Clarke**



Fishing for buyers: the agent has announced a cut in the price of the Boleside stretch of the Tweed from £4.5 million to £3.25 million, valuing each salmon caught at £7.200

Calculating the bank rate

The chalk streams of southern England wind through green meadows between banks of bur-reed and brooklime, meadow-sweet, and hemp-agrimony, purple loosestrife and cress. Fat trout dimple the surface among fronds of water crowfoot, sipping insects that the languid currents bring.

The salmon rivers of Scotland begin in the high mountains, leaping down steep, craggy clefts. In their middle reaches they gradually widen and slow. The water rumples over rocks and slides over gravel. In good years, salmon fresh from the sea forge through the shallows and roll in the deeps, in some pools lying shoulder to shoulder like shimmering chain mail.

Such idylls must seem as far removed from the world of real estate as it is possible to get. And yet the cut and thrust of the marketplace is nowhere more sharply at work. The most credible survey of angling in recent years, published in January 1995 by the National Rivers Authority, suggested that there were 3.3 million anglers aged 12 and over in Britain — 840,000 fishers for trout and salmon in England and Wales alone. As the numbers go on rising and as streams that were once clean and free suffer the pollution of the late 20th century, prices for the best remaining water are being driven ever higher and the means of generating cash are becoming more and more complex.

A beat on the River Test, at Timsbury, is for sale at up to £8.250 a rod

The traditional way of acquiring fishing was by buying a stretch of water, although leasing has long been common. Now, many salmon waters are being time-shared on the same principle that applies to holiday villas, with a specific week's fishing each year being sold. The only real difference from the holiday-home market is in the process of valuation, and most of the big London agents and many local specialists are wader-deep in the business.

In the case of a given salmon beat, agents attach a notional value to each salmon caught and then multiply this figure by the total annual catch to arrive at an overall price for fishing rights only.

The value of a fish from a given beat depends on the quality of fishing it provides. Anglers will pay more to fish from both banks rather than one, for brisk and evenly paced water or for deeper pools where salmon will rest on their upstream journeys — the longer a fish stays in a beat, the more chance there is of catching it. The current range per fish is around £4,000 to £10,000. A beat providing ten salmon at £5,000 would be valued at around £50,000; a beat offering 100 salmon at £8,000 would be worth around £800,000.

Like most property, river prices peaked a few years ago and have been falling since. It is not long since the Lower Arndilly beat of the Spey, which meets the sea east of Inverness, was reported as being sold at £17,000 a fish. Recently, Strutt & Parker announced a cut from £4.5 million to £3.25 million in the price of the Boleside stretch of the Tweed, valuing each of the 450 fish caught not at £10,000 but at £7,200.

Likewise Knight, Frank & Rutley and Langley-Taylor, acting for the Bulmer cider family, are offering the Halladale river in the north of Scotland at £1.4 million today, against £1.85 million a few months ago.

The most valuable trout fishing — only trout and salmon fishing have real commercial value because fishing for coarse fish is in such huge supply — is to be found in the streams of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Dorset. Pre-eminent along these waters are the rivers Test and Itchen, waters made famous not only by the quality of the sport they can offer, but by the libraries of books that have been written about them.

The Hampshire Test is the most famous trout stream in the world, because a small group of Victorian anglers codified the now worldwide sport of dry fly fishing on its banks. Owners and agents alike owe a more tangible debt than most to Frederik Halford and his *Dry Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice*, published in 1888.

Ian Hay, of the Rod Box, a well-known fishing tackle supply business in Winchester, who values fishing on behalf of many owners, says the best chalk-stream waters are now worth around £200 a yard for double bank fishing but that, as with salmon fishing, such prime beats only occasionally come onto the market.

Time-sharing has made an appearance even on these hallowed waters this year. Savills are offering a beat on the Test, at Timsbury, at up to £8,250 a rod plus an annual management fee of £378. This gives one day's fishing a fortnight, or 12 days in the season, and some rods are still available.

More traditionally Knight Frank & Rutley are offering 800 yards of main Itchen at Twyford, near Winchester, plus a mile of side waters for outright sale. The asking price is £275,000. Unusually, this deal includes 61 acres of bankside land which, although not the best, could come in useful for casting practice or picnics if sport is slow. Or for pacing over ruefully when that corker has got away.

● *Strutt and Parker, 0131-226 2500; Knight Frank and Rutley, 0131-225 8171; Langley, Taylor 0131-220 0576; Savills, 01356 622187.*

From old farm to house of dreams

A new book reveals the secret of converting old French country houses without losing their character

■ THE FRENCH FARMHOUSE
By Elsie Burch Donald
Little, Brown and Company (0171-911 8000) £18.99.

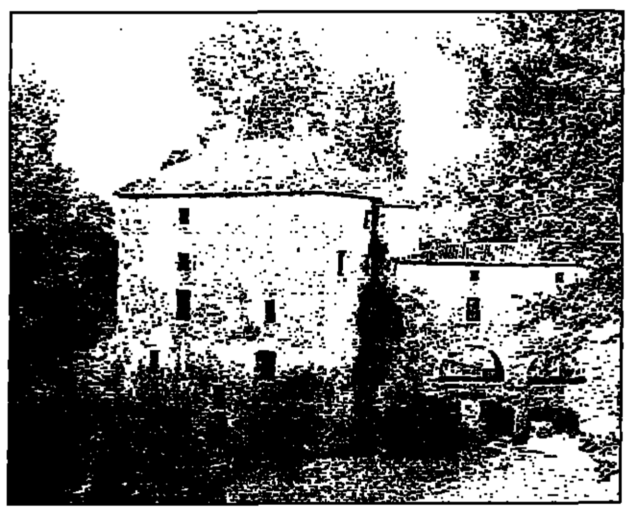
The prospect of buying an old farmhouse, ripe for renovation and restoring it to its former glory with every modern convenience, is the stuff dreams are made of — and best-selling books and less successful television series.

Many Britons are crossing the Channel to find dilapidated farmhouses in Normandy and Brittany, at a third of the price they would pay on England's southwest coast.

Further south, in the Perigord and Provence, the Germans, Dutch, Swiss and even a few wealthy Parisians are moving in as abandoned farmhouses are sold off by French landowners.

As restorations get under way, with the newcomers ripping out centuries-old stone sinks to install fitted kitchens and bathrooms, and re-roofing, much of the character of these old houses is lost.

In her book, *The French Farmhouse*, Elsie Burch Donald explains in detail the function and purpose of these old French peasant houses; how they were built and furnished and the life that was lived in them.



Ripe for restoration, a fortified French mill in the Gironde

For anyone who has dreamed of owning a French farmhouse, or who owns one, this well-researched book is packed with information about regional architectural styles, and includes 300 line drawings and beautiful colour photographs. Here are all the architectural delights of rural France, from the half-timbered *colombage* houses of Normandy and Alsace, to the alpine chalets of Savoy and the ochre-washed houses in Provence, with their blue shutters and wisteria-clad verandas.

Readers will find some useful tips about how to tackle restoration, with recipes for mortars, plasters, limewash and "torchis" (wattle and daub); advice on roofing, including thatching, stone slabs and slates, and the right way to lay old terracotta tiles.

Interiors are not overlooked, with information on local styles of furniture and decoration, from the *coffres* (carved oak chests) and *lits-clos* (box beds) of Brittany and the *armoires* (wardrobes) of Normandy to the red tiled floors and bead curtains of Provence.

The chapter on outbuildings includes *bergeries* (sheepfolds), *étables* (stables), *pigeonniers* (dovecots), *fournils* (bakehouses) and *chais* (ground-floor cellars, located on the north side of houses).

There were no lavatories or outhouses; women resorted to the stable and men to the adjacent fields.

CHERYL TAYLOR

THE TIMES
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BOOKS

Figuring all the angles of the Lord

Christmas is not the season for new books on religion, but the year has provided a fruitful — and controversial — crop for spiritual thought

The season of myths and mellow fruitlessness is upon us. Among publishers, Christmas means chocolate-box picture books with angels and nativities — anything but serious works on religion or catalysts of contemplation. Sheltering in the interstices of the literary year, though, are a handful of books that justify the ways of man to God.

Not among them, alas, is the longest of the religious works to cross my desk. **God in All Worlds: An Anthology of Contemporary Spiritual Writing** (Chatto, £25) is edited by Lucinda Vardey, Mother Teresa's ghostwriter and an expert on yoga and Gestalt psychology. She feels compelled to swell this hefty volume with the most meretricious spokesmen of our zeitgeist: gurus of all religions or pseudo-religions, and of none.

There are fine modern texts here of authentic spiritual depth (though the saints are all our contemporaries) — but one must wade through too much New Age mumbo-jumbo about "awakening the Great Mother" to find them. For my taste, the best thing about the book is its dedication to Edith Stein, the Catholic-Jewish philosopher and nun, who was murdered at Auschwitz. I scoured nearly 900 pages in search of this great thinker, whose works are still unknown despite her beatification in 1987; but I found not a word by her — and there is no index.

Alice K. Turner, author of **The History of Hell** (Robert Hale, £19.99), has an appropriate pedigree for sorting the goats from the sheep: fiction editor of *Playboy* for 15 years. Her bright and breezy idiom cannot evoke the sheer horror of damnation for those who have believed in the doctrine, which she patently considers a mere metaphor: but this is a thorough and readable survey, enhanced by notably well-chosen illustrations.

To add to the good cheer, we have a provocative study of the iconography of Hell's monarch. **The Devil: A Mask without a Face** by Luther Link (Reaktion, £17.95) is a scholarly work which covers the period of medieval and Renaissance Christianity from the 4th to the 16th centuries. Link does not believe in the Devil, and is highly critical of his representation in Christian culture. His thesis is that the Church took a wrong turning when St Augustine rejected Origen's conviction, later echoed by Peter Abelard, that even Satan could be saved.

DANIEL JOHNSON

The demonisation of the Church's enemies, whether heretics, pagans or Jews, was responsible for centuries of religious persecution, he argues, and even in the modern atrocities committed in the name of secular ideologies, belief in the Devil was indirectly culpable. Link sometimes writes as though his distaste for their theology invalidated Dante and Michelangelo, but at least he makes a stab at an intractable conundrum.

The occasions for the most sacred art are often reassuringly mundane. We do not know for whom the magnificent illuminations of the **Bible Moralisée** (Harvey Miller, £48) were made in 13th-century Paris, but this early example of vernacular scripture was surely intended to serve the very modern purpose of persuading some great lord or lady of the relevance of the Old Testament to their own lives. It is tough on clerics, students, insurers, Benedictines, Jews, astronomers and dialecticians, among other sinners. A thousand illuminated medallions, exquisitely reproduced, plus exemplary translation and commentary by Gerald Guest, make this a feast for the bibliophile.

D. J. Enright's **Interplay: A Kind of Commonplace Book** (OUP, £16.99) is not strictly a religious work: it belongs, rather, to the tradition of journalists, essayists and aphorists that began with Montaigne. Enright is a Leavisite, but without his master's crabbed parochialism; a poet and man of letters without pretentions. Here, a true sage leaves the study door of his mind ajar. His preoccupations may be timeless, but he is unmistakably of our time, even in his Christianity. This *carnet*, which is also his credo, has, I suspect, been rigorously edited; there is no flab. It is a good companion for bedside or bathroom.

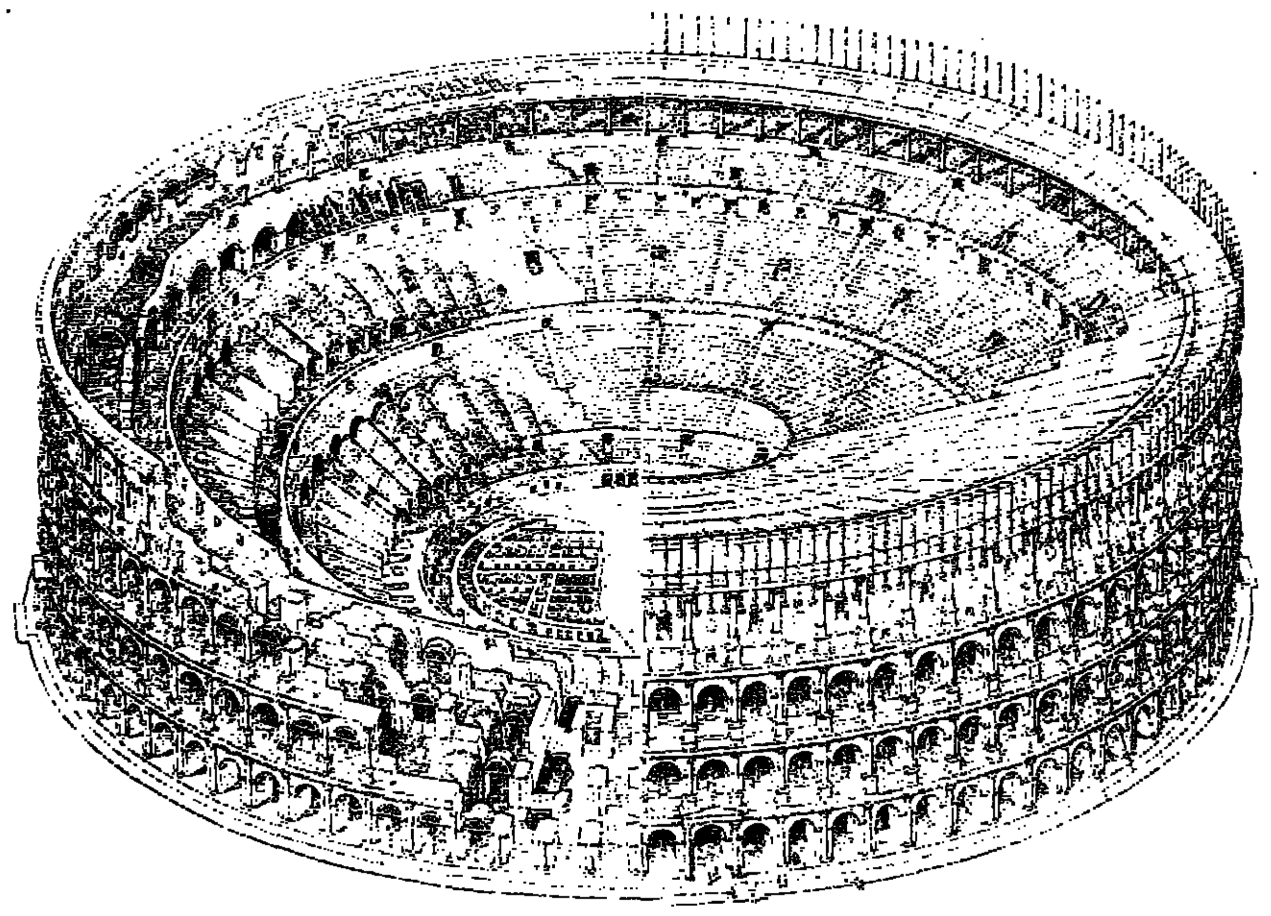
Prayers and Meditations (Everyman, £9.99), edited by Peter Washington, is arranged according to the canonical hours: from Matins at 3am to Compline at 9pm. Hard to improve on this little pocket-book: the prayers, chiefly but not exclusively Christian, respond to every mood and predicament. I gave my copy to a friend, the philosopher Gillian Rose, a few days before her death a fortnight ago, and the solace it gave her was beyond price. My next copy will live beside her own incomparable meditation, **Love's Work** (Chatto, £9.99), on my bookshelf.

Sarah Johnson picks out books for children who don't like reading; and **Maureen Owen** on special interest non-fiction for teenagers

Hey, thanks a lot, Mum

IT IS easy to give books to children who like reading: the problem is those who wail, "Aw, not *books*! I wanted a *proper* present!" on Christmas morning. Yet the bookshop is the best last resort for late Christmas shoppers, so here are some ideas for anti-book children.

The trick is to disguise the book as something else. Stephen Biesty's **Incredible Pop-up Cross Sections** (Dorling Kindersley, £9.99) and Shonagh Rae's **Morris's Magic Glasses** (Tango, £7.99) are two novelty books that offer satisfying game and exploration value for five-year-olds and over. For activity-minded children who are getting interested in history, look out for Dorling Kindersley's **Action Pack: Rome** (£12.99), a kind of do-it-all history project in a box. I am impressed by **Fun with Patten** (Hamlyn, £14.99), an introduction to the principles of pattern design using rubber stamps and paint devised by Fifi Weinert and drawing inspiration from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. A child of more than seven could happily make gorgeous gift-wrapping paper with this.



History in a box: the Colosseum from *Action Pack: Rome* — "The trick is to disguise the book as something else"

Books can be games, or competitions. Over the year I have grown mildly attached to the **Fabled Lands** fantasy game-book series by Dave Morris and Jamie Thomson. The authors have devised a fiendishly complicated and absorbing game that now runs into 12 titles (Pan, £4.99 each) for ages ten and over.

Or books can be about the child's main interest. Young balletomanes will love Belinda Hollyer's brightly-told **Stories from the Classical Ballet** (Macmillan, £12.99): for football fanatics choose Rob Child's **Big Football Collection** (Young Corgi, £3.99), one of a burgeoning range of sports books aimed at anti-reading boys of seven-plus.

Into the stocking at the last minute (for seven-year-olds and up) goes the Collins facsimile edition of J. R. R. Tolkien's **Letters from Father Christmas** (£12.99), reproducing the envelopes and letters which Tolkien devised as a holiday entertainment for his son. For younger children, you cannot go wrong with a stocking-size edition of **Where's Wally — The Fantastic Journey** (Walker, £4.25) by Martin Handford or Peter Collington's textless classic, **On Christmas Eve** (Heinemann, £2.99). Look for Hamlyn's **Stringalongs** (£4.99 each), an excellent matching-up game for one player that will keep a five to eight-year-old happy in the back of the car through a long winter traffic jam.

If your anti-book child is a show-off, channel the energy with Fay Presto's easy-to-copy magic tricks in **Making Magic** (Hamlyn, £3.99) for five-year-olds and over; or the good Two-Can/Watts **I Want To Be A...** books (£7.99 each) which give step-by-step instructions on turning oneself into a creditable junior clown, magician, acrobat or juggler.

Posy Simmonds has scored again with **F-Freezing ABC** (Cape, £8.99), a charming alphabet book for under-sixes that exploits the way old-fashioned alphabet books write words as though someone were shivering with cold: "A-A-Atishoo!" sneezed the Anteater. "I-it's a-absolutely ar-ar-arctic!"

I have read Judith Kerr's Mog stories for under-sixes so often that a new one, **Mog and the Granny** (Collins, £8.99) is always welcome. Both Kerr and Joan Aiken deserve thanks simply for still being around to delight our children as much as they enthralled us, and Aiken's collection of favourite stories, **A Handful of Gold** (Jonathan Cape, £10.99), may well be hijacked by nostalgic parents. To be read aloud to all children, and alone by eight-pluses.

Finally, a reminder of some of the best-value storybooks this season:

Under-fives: **Cat, You Better Come Home** by Garrison Keillor (Faber, £9.99), and **Spider's Christmas Gift** by Melissa Kajpust.

Seven and over: **Coming to England** by Floella Benjamin (Pavilion, £12.99).

Nine and over: **Granny the Pag** by Nina Bawden (Hamish Hamilton, £10.99).

From 'Did you know?' to 'Well, I never'

THINK of the young people you know as a generation of burgeoning specialists, their roots in contemporary culture, and you will discover a remarkable range of non-fiction books designed to help them along their personal roads to Damascus. Take, for instance, the aspiring musician with an eye on the school orchestra who wants to learn more about how music is made. **A Young Person's Guide to Music** by Neil Ardley with music by Poul Ruders (Dorling Kindersley, £16.99) includes an audio CD of the young Danish composer's new concerto performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra. After the "performance", conductor Andrew Davies takes the concerto to pieces, giving a professional analysis. This intensive experience proved too much for a nine-year-old clarinettist who had expressed a keen interest, so putting this book in the 12 upwards range of future musicologists, seems a safer bet.

The Young Oxford Book of the Cinema by *Radio Times* critic David Parkinson (Oxford, £12.99) is a wide-angled research job on the story of the film industry from the days of the kinetograph, the first reliable movie camera built in 1891. Stars from swashbuckling hero Douglas Fairbanks to tough-talking Jodie Foster take their place thematically alongside Stunts and the Studio System in this polished production.

Jodie Foster: history of the cinema

In **Daily Life in a Wartime House** by Laura Wilson (Hamlyn, £9.99), published in association with the Imperial War Museum, we meet the Allpress family who had a steel Andersen shelter in their back garden but no bathroom, and whose Clapham house had all its windows cracked but fortunately escaped a direct hit. Given the interest that children now take in the Second World War, this well-stocked book with its nostalgic illustrations and factual background provides an excellent link between eight to 14 year olds and their grandparents.

In the **Illustrated Book of Myths: Tales and Legends of the World**, retold by Neil Philip (Dorling Kindersley, £14.99), we read that in the Japanese version of the Creation a male and female god stood on the floating bridge of heaven and stirred the ocean with a jewelled spear until it curdled and produced the first island. If one person's myth is another's religious belief, perhaps there are too many compressed philosophies here — from Aboriginal to Viking — to bring true understanding to the dreams of mankind. But background information and appropriate colour photographs are helpful, and Nilesh Mistry's illustrations glow with traditional culture.

For students of mythology, it is not too much to say that **The Wanderings of Odysseus** (Frances Lincoln, £14.99), the late Rosemary Sutcliffe's faultless retelling of Homer's *Odyssey* illustrated by Alan Lee, is likely to make any reader over the age of nine a better judge of human values.

I admit to getting hooked on **Tales of Real Escape** by Paul Dowswell (Usborne, £4.99) before handing it on to a mature 11-year-old. Escape stories go from the political and criminal to the liberation of slaves in the American South by Harriet Tubman. Stories include Houdini's bondage feats and the escapees who got through the Berlin Wall inside a theatrical cow.

Twelve episodes from history featuring famous inventions is the basis of **Eureka** (Templar, £7.99) a puzzle book by Theodore Rowland-Entwhistle. However, deliberate mistakes in each picture — such as the first motor car passing traffic lights — make this more of a Boxing Day challenge than the simplistic illustrations suggest.

The phenomenal success of *Cross-Sections* (in which detailed views of the inner workings of various subjects can be seen in close up) is seen to best advantage this year in Richard Orr's **Nature Cross-Sections** (Dorling Kindersley, £12.99). Stunningly revealed among other marvels of nature are the intricacies of a beaver lodge, a rock pool, a bees' nest, a rainforest and the American desert complete with hidden rattlesnake and scorpion. Moira Butterfield's equally detailed text puts this in the eight-to-12 league.

For those in the eight-to-13 age group, Kingfisher's **Encyclopaedia of Lands and Peoples** (£25) is a splendidly arranged introduction to the world's countries, cultures, politics and people. A fully illustrated encyclopaedic dictionary, facts and figures are given in boxes and a grid reference system makes place finding a friendly exercise. Others in the excellent Kingfisher series include science and history.

As Agony Aunt on a teenage magazine, Anita Naik is said to receive 1,000 letters a week, most of which end with the question which is the title of her book — **Am I Normal?** (Hodder, £3.99). Anxieties cover the usual topics: body, families, love, friends, sexuality. Reassurance is of the "*there is no such thing as normal*" variety, except in cases where further advice is clearly necessary. Altogether, a fairly normal recycling job.

THE TIMES
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Kristin Scott Thom
on films, family and why she prefers France
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The Times / Dillons Bestsellers

HARDBACK

			Last week	No. weeks
1	DELIA SMITH'S WINTER COLLECTION **Delia Smith** *(BBC)*	£10.99	1	9
2	IMMEDIATE ACTION **Andy McNab** *(Bantam)*	£12.99	2	7
3	X-FILES BOOK OF THE UNEXPLAINED Vol 1 **Jane Goldman** *(Simon & Schuster)*	£15.99	3	6
4	ENIGMA **Robert Harris** *(Hutchinson)*	£11.99	4	11
5	THE JOLLY POCKET POSTMAN **Jane & Alan Ahlberg** *(Heinemann)*	£7.99	0	1
6	THE ROAD AHEAD **Bill Gates** *(Viking)*	£12.50	6	2
7	COME TO GRIEF **Dick Francis** *(Michael Joseph)*	£10.99	8	8
8	THE GHOST ROAD **Pat Barker** *(Viking)*	£13	5	5
9	MASKERADE **Terry Pratchett** *(Gollancz)*	£11.99	7	7
10	FROM POTTER'S FIELD **Patricia Cornwell** *(Little Brown)*	£11.99	9	11

PAPERBACK

1	LONG WALK TO FREEDOM **Nelson Mandela** *(Little Brown)*	£6.99	2	9
2	A-Z OF BEHAVING BADLY **Simon Nye** *(Pavilion)*	£5.99	3	3
3	WRITING HOME **Alan Bennett** *(Faber)*	£7.99	4	10
4	UNOFFICIAL X-FILES COMPANION **Ngaire Genge** *(Macmillan)*	£7.99	6	3
5	SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS **David Guterson** *(Bloomsbury)*	£5.99	1	13
6	INTERESTING TIMES **Terry Pratchett** *(Corgi)*	£4.99	5	6
7	REGENERATION **Pat Barker** *(Penguin)*	£5.99	7	5
8	THE SEVENTH SCROLL **Wilbur Smith** *(Papermac)*	£9.99	8	4
9	WILD HORSES **Dick Francis** *(Pan)*	£5.99	10	5
10	THE LAST HUMAN **Doug Naylor** *(Penguin)*	£5.99	11	6
11	THE MAKING OF PRIDE AND PREJUDICE **Sue Birtwistle & Susy Conklin** *(Penguin)*	£9.99	9	7
12	FAR SIDE GALLERY No 5 **Gary Larsen** *(Warner)*	£8.99	14	3
13	POLITICALLY INCORRECT HOLIDAY STORIES **James Finn Garner** *(Simon & Schuster)*	£6.99	0	2
14	BORROWED TIME **Robert Goddard** *(Corgi)*	£4.99	0	1
15	SUPERPLONK '96 **Malcolm Gluck** *(Coronet)*	£4.99	17	3
16	PEMBERLEY **Emma Tennant** *(Sceptre)*	£5.99	12	4
17	PRIDE AND PREJUDICE (TV tie-in) **Jane Austen** *(Penguin)*	£2.99	16	10
18	THE EYE IN THE DOOR **Pat Barker** *(Penguin)*	£5.99	13	5
19	TRAINSPOTTING Irvine Welsh (Minerva)	£6.99	15	20
20	CALVIN & HOBBES TENTH ANNIVERSARY BOOK **Bill Watterson** *(Warner)*	£8.99	19	4

Any book from this list can be ordered from Dillons Mail Order Tel: 0171 636 1577 Fax: 0171 580 7680 DILLONS

And Granny, too

LEFT with a couple of unticked names on the present list and several sheets of unemployed Santa Claus gift wrap? Think literature.

Nostalgic grandparents will love you for Roy Jenkins's **Gladstone** (Macmillan, £20), which warmed the hearts of many of the elder statesmen in the annual "Book of the Year" round ups. Richard Ingrams's **Malcolm Muggeridge** (HarperCollins, £18) may rekindle more recent fires — though softer hearts will prefer **Always and Always: Wartime Letters of Hugh and Margaret Williams**, edited by Kate Dunn (John Murray, £19.99).

For children whose horizons extend beyond Segatendo games of mass carnage, try Ted Hughes's **Collected Animal Poems** (Faber, vols 1 & 2 £3.99, vols 3 & 4 £5.99), which capture the Laureate's talents for enlivening nature without the leadenness of his adult works. Hipper kids will prefer **Blurbook** (HarperCollins, £9.99), the story of the Britpop idols. For the slightly younger, Quentin Blake's wordless **Clown** (Cape, £9.99) has been hailed as his best in years.

For older teenagers, think about **Marabou Stork Nightmares** by Irvine Welsh (Cape, £9.99), the ultimate in hardcore clubland lit-chic, while football-crazy New Lads will be flattered to receive **Kicking and Screaming** by Rogan Taylor and Andrew Ward (Robson, £16.95). Their sisters may prefer Germaine Greer's history of women's poetry, **Slipshod Sybils** (Viking, £20). Or not.

Absolute no-no's for all the family include Salman Rushdie's **The Moor's Last Sigh** (Cape, £15.99), Pat Barker's **The Ghost Road** (Viking, £15), and Penelope Fitzgerald's **The Blue Flower** (Flamingo £14.99) — if your targets have not read them already, they will be getting them from someone else.

Fathers may be more grateful for Anthony Hanson's controversial guide to the world's most complex wine region, **Burgundy** (Faber, £15.99), or Robert Harris's latest thriller **Enigma** (Hutchinson, £11.99).

While the old man is adoze by the yuletide fire, mothers may care to lose themselves in Sarah Dunant's **Under My Skin** (Hamish Hamilton, £14.99) or Isabel Fonseca's history of the gypsies, **Bury Me Standing** (Chatto, £18). But it may be salutary to have them reflect on Anita Brookner's **Incidents in the Rue Laugier** (Cape, £14.99), a tale of domestic life even more dismal than the average Christmas gathering.

GILES COREN

هكذا من الأصل

NEW IN PAPERBACK

D. HEINRICH FRANK

Lawrence (centre) and Leonard Woolley in Turkey, 1913

■ THE GOLDEN WARRIOR
The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia
By Lawrence James
Abacus, £9.99

GIVEN his penchant for romanticising his own life, T. E. Lawrence would be gratified that in the 60 years since his death his legend has continued to fascinate. Although the hagiographies of the 1920s and 1930s were painfully contradicted by later evidence of his tendency to fabricate, the film *Lawrence of Arabia* (based on Lawrence's own version of events in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*) restored him to popular super-hero status forever.

The impressive achievement of Lawrence James's enthralling biography is that it sorts out the truth from the legend once and for all. In particular, this revised edition firmly establishes that Lawrence could not have been arrested, whipped and raped in Dera, as he claimed, and includes an intriguing exploration of his masochistic sexuality. It also demonstrates that it was not Lawrence and the Bedouins who liberated Damascus.

However, this is a generous-spirited book, which accords Lawrence his full due as a brilliant maverick who lived and fought by his own rules. It convincingly attributes his flights of fancy to a lifelong passion for medieval chivalry and shows that much of his odd behaviour in later life was an attempt to escape from a reputation he knew to be false.

■ LAPSING
By Jill Paton Walsh
Black Swan, £5.99

THIS delightful earlier novel by the author of the 1994 Booker shortlisted *Knowledge of Angels* takes the life of a young Catholic girl from the enchantments of childhood through the formative period of her life as an undergraduate at Oxford in the 1950s. Blessed with eyes that see the beauty of the world around her, Tessa believes herself capable of great love and great faith. In a story full of comedy and painful religious inquiry, she finds herself at the last not sure of either.

■ LAST LETTERS HOME
Edited by Tamasin Day-Lewis
Pan, £5.99

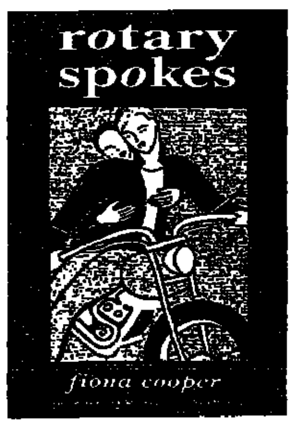
IN THE upheaval of the Second World War, families were forced to keep in touch by letter. This collection, complete with interviews with surviving writers and their relatives, is almost unbearably poignant. Some came home. Some did not, like Ted Baker, who left behind a letter for his little girl; or Ken Stevens, whose widow later received the diary he had kept for her as a prisoner of war. Saddest of all is the tender exchange between the couple who were determined to deserve a white wedding, only for the man to be killed before it could take place.

■ WHERE DO YOU STOP?
The Personal History, Adventures, Experiences and Observations of Peter Leroy (Continued)
By Eric Kraft
Black Swan, £5.99

THE LATEST in Eric Kraft's acclaimed Peter Leroy series has Peter recalling the days when, aged 14 and encouraged by his alluring science teacher, he began to look at life's big question — where do you stop? Peter's well-thumbed copy of *Adventures in General Science* doesn't have the answer, so he concludes that maybe the solution is that "most of everything is nothing". Don't be put off by the postmodern range of allusions: this is an original and humorous novel that has the devastating truthfulness of a child's view of the world.

■ THE BASKETBALL DIARIES
By Jim Carroll
Penguin, £5.99

THE ADOLESCENT diaries of Jim Carroll, a basketball prodigy who goes steeply downhill mainlining heroin and being manhandled in public toilets, were apparently scribbled on the spot in 1960s New York. The book is republished to coincide with Scott Kalvert's film version. The *hip, hardboiled, foulmouthed prose is punchy, funny* and *shocking*. Nevertheless, the slang and the squalor become repetitive and Carroll's writing has a self-fictionalising ring. Some entries are so smartly finished, it's hard to believe the author was only fourteen.



■ ROTARY SPOKES
By Fiona Cooper
Serpent's Tail, £7.99

THIS arresting account of one woman's journey towards self-knowledge instantly established Cooper as a darling of the counter-culture circuit. Cooper's characters tend to operate outside the boundaries of conventional society; to them the only value that matters is freedom, in the sense of supreme self-assertion. The hero of this model is the rebel, someone like the eponymous Rotary Spokes. Blond, over six feet tall and a fanatical biker, she is an unforgettable creation, who, after a series of increasingly improbable adventures, eventually finds peace in the arms of another woman.

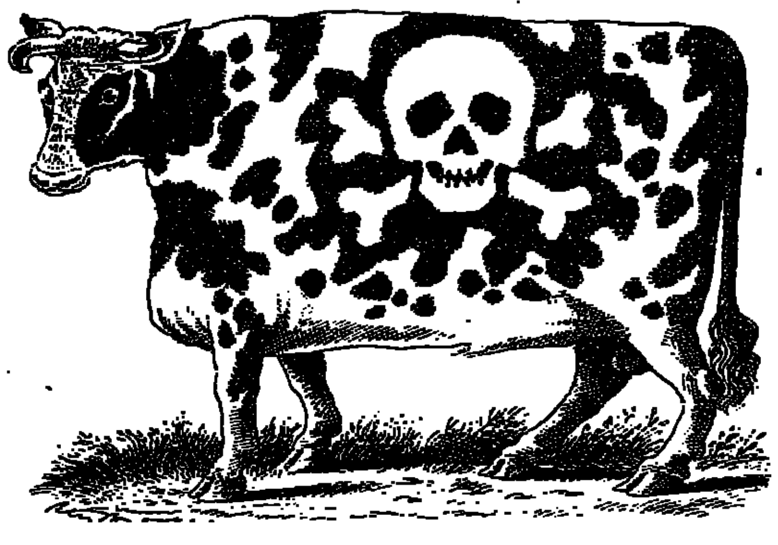
■ SWEETS FROM STRANGERS
By Simon Corrigan
Abacus, £6.99

DROPOUT Daniel returns from Paris to stay for a while with his sister, in a relatively ordinary household full of children. He is haunted by his past, but the real dangers are in the present. Visits to Bohemian Brixton and the London club scene turn out to be brief halts only, on an inevitably circular journey back to the corrupt haven he has chosen. In the process, someone other than Daniel loses his innocence. Questions about what precisely constitutes health in families, and thereafter in the individual soul, are subtly linked in this short, vivid story of abduction.

Contributors: Nicki Household, Alison Burns, Fiona Hook, Lucy Lethbridge, Kate Bassett, Jason Cowley.

Pilgrim against progress

Victor Papanek's designs on a green future are out of touch with reality, says **Stephen Bayley**



■ THE GREEN IMPERATIVE — Ecology and ethics in design and architecture
By Victor Papanek
Thames & Hudson, £14.95

I DO NOT know whether he was not invited, or simply decided not to attend, but Victor Papanek was never at the big party that was American corporate design in the 1960s and 1970s. This was the period when Eliot Noyes designed a corporate-identity programme for Mobil which made every filling station from Hendon to the Himalayas look identical.

The decade before, Noyes had given IBM advice about preferred colours, leaving the computer manufacturer known as Big Blue. Schooled in leaner times, we gasp today at the presumption, but — boy — was it optimistic.

Instead, Papanek was a contrarian. His first book, *Design for the Real World*, was published a quarter of a century ago and made him famous. Just as Noyes was designing the liquor cabinet in the Mobil corporate jet, Papanek was talking about salvage, recycling and the limits of growth. It was, of course, the time of Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* and when Friends of the Earth was founded.

Papanek exploited a public taste that was growing restive with corporatist design. If, at its most absurd, his subversive green-ness would have us all using yoghurt pots and string instead of satellite communications, his clever alliance of (industrial) design with growing environmental awareness assured him invitations to design conferences everywhere.

The new book is a development of the old one, but with a more apocalyptic tone and even less regard for the 20th century, a position given cameo roles throughout the atrociously written text. There is an intellectually feeble attack on the machine aesthetic, and he says there is "no moral to a kettle", an opinion not shared by William Morris.

Indeed, Papanek's mixture of lofty vanity ("I was commissioned by the United Nations") and hamfisted argument might be designed to outrage rationalists. While there is no room for complacency, the record of environmental disasters (Minamata, 1956; Sardinian dioxin, 1949; Three Mile Island, 1982; Bhopal, 1984; and Chernobyl, 1986) is amazingly small for a crowded planet.

Predictably, Papanek is anti-car, unless that vehicle has been handmade in the Third World. He does not care that the automobile is a miracle of affordable technology that has brought wealth and personal freedom to millions. His ignorance of the technical and cultural issues in vehicle design is astonishing: while damning other manufacturers for selling "status kitsch for a jaded elite", Papanek takes a look at a press photograph of the exploded parts of an expensive, limited-production BMW sports car (if you please) and says BMW leads the world in Design-for-Disassembly.

Withal, Papanek is, in fact, anti-design. He says, with all the subjective judgmental certainty he condemns elsewhere, that the "Inuit are the best designers in the world". The inconsistency in argument is shocking: it is wrong for Le Corbusier to slaughter ponies to provide skin for his furniture, but quite in order for Inuits and other ethnic peoples to play merry hell with their local wildlife.

But what can you expect of someone who writes "I am presently designing a birthing chair for a women's group"? Papanek would have us all living in bio-stable rainforests surrounded by vernacular tat. He is Thoreau to Bill Gates's Henry Ford. Gates might not be a satisfactory alternative, but I am certain that the answer to our problems involves more technology, not less.

X marks the public G-spot

That's G for gullible. **Derwent May** investigates a sci-fi phenomenon

■ THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE: THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO THE X-FILES
By Brian Lowry
HarperCollins, £9.99

■ THE UNOFFICIAL X-FILES COMPANION
By Ngaire Genge
Macmillan, £9.99

■ THE X-FILES BOOK OF THE UNEXPLAINED, Vol 1
By Jane Goldman
Simon & Schuster, £15.99

■ GROUND ZERO
By Kevin J. Anderson
HarperCollins, £9.99

THE LATEST cult television programme is *The X-Files*. This paranormal thriller series on BBC2 has taken off so dizzily in the two years it has been running that there are already three spin-off books from it on the bestseller list, and a fourth book has just appeared. Its fans call themselves the X-philes.

Its heroes, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, are two rather unsubtle FBI agents who get assigned all the cases involving returns from the dead, hibernating killers, magic mushrooms and UFOs. Mulder believes wholeheartedly in the paranormal, since his sister was abducted by aliens. Scully, his sceptical female colleague, was first assigned to work with him in order to frustrate him — for the FBI often does not want the cases solved. However, as the series has progressed, the pair have grown to work closely together. They usually get their man-beast in the end.

Judging by the books, the cultists do not wholly believe in the reality of Mulder and Scully and their grisly enemies. *The Truth is Out There: The Official Guide to the X-Files* is more like a would-be television programmer's guide to the series. It records how the series was first conceived by the scriptwriter Chris Carter and how the American television company Fox Broadcasting took time to realise that its cryptic, spooky endings were a strength, not a flaw. It tells us how David Duchovny, who plays Mulder, appropriately did a PhD at Yale on "Magic and technology in contemporary poetry and prose", and it gives a synopsis and background of all the episodes so far.

The Unofficial X-Files Companion goes over similar ground, though it tries to leave one with chilling thoughts about the disturbing phenomena that our heroes confront, such as the vampire that got impaled on a wooden coat-hanger. It also puts dedicated viewers to the test with difficult quizzes.

The X-Files Book of the Unexplained, Vol 1 forgets the programme and goes into the evidence for spontaneous combustion, freaks of nature, hauntings and government cover-ups. The newest book, *Ground Zero*, is an original Mulder and Scully novel, baldly written and printed in large type.

The words "Created by Chris Carter" are plastered as conspicuously over all these books as the name of Roy Plomley is over anything connected with *Desert Island Discs*. Isn't Carter in danger of appearing in the X-Files as a victim of some strange, supernatural jealousy?

From Aintree to eternity, the story of the great Red Rum

Red Rum opens a betting shop in retirement. He made many personal appearances

■ RED RUM 1965-1995
By Ivor Herbert
Century, £14.99

RED RUM was finally transported to the great stable in the sky two months ago, at the grand age of 30, a celebrity long after his three Grand National victories in the 1970s and remembered with affection by everybody interested in racing and a good many who are not.

After his death he was buried by the winning post at Aintree, scene of his triumphs, marked by a simple plaque. This last chapter of his career is recalled with the publication of *Red Rum 1965-1995*, an updated edition of a book first published in 1974 after his first two Grand National victories. He was second for the next two years before achieving his third victory in 1977, an astonishing five-year record.

After two years on the flat — and once ridden by another racing legend, Lester Piggott, in his first season — Red Rum embarked on his jumping career, winning 24 out of 100 races and placed in 45 more.

Ivor Herbert, a racing journalist who had been a National Hunt trainer, does him full justice, charting his remarkable progress to the status of national hero.

CHRISTOPHER WARMAN

How we cook a British stew

■ HISTORICAL BRITAIN
By Eric Wood
Harvill, £30

HISTORIANS testify to three great upheavals in the character of Britain. They were the Anglo-Saxon invasion, the Black Death and the Industrial Revolution. Convention has it that we are now experiencing a fourth: homogenisation by instant mass communication. As a result the shadings are disappearing. The diversity of town and country, highland and lowland, Cornwall and Durham, fensman and crofter is being submerged in one national soup.

Eric Wood has made it a life's work to tell us what we are in danger of losing, by telling us how we came to be. His *Historical Britain* is part encyclopedia, part textbook, part call to arms. It is born of the "new geography" out of rescue archaeology, but that should put off nobody. He offers a mass of information simply portrayed, superbly illustrated and clearly sourced. What really was the Black Death? Where were the last unmanaged wildwoods of Britain (not in Scotland but probably the Forest of Dean)? Why were the shires? What has happened to our climate? Why are there so many chapels in Wales?

Wood watches the population of these islands as they move over economic time. The medieval wealth that forged modern England was based in the Cotswolds and East Anglia and made Norwich, Boston, King's Lynn and Gloucester the largest cities in the land. Slowly, the centre of gravity slid towards London but then exploded out again as coal and iron reserves were exploited and trade went with them.

As a backdrop to these furious changes in the towns is a countryside innovating more slowly and steadily penetrated by urban and then suburban settlers. Wood's eye seems to miss nothing, from fertility emblems on old church walls to the handrails on a Georgian house. He can embrace the clearings of Celtic hillsmen and the sprawl of Milton Keynes. He is a master portraitist of our land.

Only occasionally does he give up the ghost. What does the meltdown of national diversity mean? To the social geographer it should be rooted in planning philosophy and guided by the sort of insights that infuse this book. We need a new sort of interventionism, locally accountable, to monitor the allocation of land and the regulation of the free market in property. With the possible exception of countries such as New Zealand and Scandinavia, no democracy has successfully married population growth to sensitive land-use planning.

Wood merely remarks of the disastrous development of urbanisation in Britain since the war that it "will have far-reaching consequences for *housing and social conditions*". More, much more, than that.

SIMON JENKINS

One to bring the House down

■ ABOUT THE HOUSE
By Jill Knight
Churchill Press, £18.50

Dame Jill's book is peppered with hilarious anecdotes

AT LAST, a political memoir for middle England to enjoy over Christmas. It's not for voyeurs, who prefer those mega-volumes of former Cabinet Ministers dripping with famous names and events. Dame Jill's unpretentious 200-pager is for the larger number who are genuinely interested in how our democracy works and enjoy a good read, including often hilarious, occasionally touching, anecdotes drawn from people and events encountered in the varied life of an MP spanning 30 years.

I can best describe this highly readable account as Alan Clark without the sleaze. Not that Dame Jill comes across as any kind of prude. There's plenty of earthy humour, drawn from well-observed events, foreign travel, constituents' letters and revealing conversations in the political surgery.

How about the Labour mayor who boasted in a rambling acceptance speech that his marriage "were consummated" on the altar steps — and survived to become a splendid civic dignatory. Or the sex-change man who thought he/she now qualified for *her* state pension at 60 instead of 65? Or how that loveable (now dead) Labour battle-axe Bessie Braddock commanded the newly elected Jill to take over Joan Lestor's desk in the lady members' room, saying: "She can go upstairs wi' the left-wingers if she likes. She's not coming in here."

One of her rare sharper observations might be headlined in the sensational press: "Sudden death of Glenda Jackson." Thus among examples of high-flyers who do not transplant well to Westminster, such as Frank Cousins and John Davies, she throws in Glenda Jackson. From a glittering star she has descended into "a very plain and very ordinary backbencher".

The best constituent's letter was of congratulations on her election from a prisoner in Bedford jail, who added a postscript: "We're all Conservatives in here." The author's nicely judged comment: "I hoped this was more an indication of the entrepreneurial bent of the inmates than evidence of general villainy among Conservative voters."

More seriously, the author gives an appealing account of her half-dozen private members' Bills and other dogged campaigns — to one of which she converted me in three pages flat. I leave readers to ponder the stories of Ted Heath and the missing cufflinks, and how he may have lost the Tories the 1974 election through his secret eviction of the Ulster Unionists from what had till then been the "Conservative & Unionist Party".

But there's just space to whet appetites for her jolly story of how on a parliamentary visit to Russia she hit on an infallible way of staying afloat in a flood of toasts washed down by vodka, without offending her hosts. That traveller's tip alone is worth the price of the book.

RALPH HARRIS

FICTION IN BRIEF

■ STONE GARDEN AND OTHER STORIES
By Alan Spence
Phoenix House, £15.99

ALAN SPENCE'S title story is set in Kyoto, where the narrator, a Scottish businessman, is spending a few days in the hope of clinching a deal with a Japanese company. Already under the spell of the place, he rapidly succumbs to the charms of its inhabitants, particuarly those of Yumiko, his beautiful interpreter. But he finds that Yumiko's loyalties are as divided as his. The love affair between East and West is central to several stories, such as *I'll be Han-Shan, You be Shih-Te*, in which two friends on a camping holiday in the Scottish Highlands strive for Zen enlighment. Other stories, such as *Wonderful Land*, about a boy living with his widowed father on a Glasgow council estate, show Spence's considerable range.

■ WISH YOU WERE HERE
By Lesley Grant-Adamson
Coronet Crime, £5.99

GRANT-ADAMSON can create terror and suspense with the minimum of gore. This immaculately plotted tale is a case in point. Its central character, Linda Conway, is a divorced, childless woman who lives alone in a cathedral city and for whom a holiday provides an opportunity to free herself from unwelcome constraints. A chance meeting with another traveller, Tom Hoby, seems like a fortunate coincidence. As the days pass, Linda discovers that her companion is not as inoffensive as he seems, but it is not until she finds herself alone with him that Linda understands the horror of her situation — and by then she is too embroiled to escape.

■ LILIAN
By Jill Gascoine
Corgi, £4.99

JILL GASCOINE'S latest novel chronicles the romance between two women — one of whom is married. Jessica Wooldridge, a menopausal housewife suffering from depression, accepts an invitation from her best friend, Norma, to visit her in California. At first resistant to the self-indulgent hedonism of Norma's life, she is gradually seduced by its charm — especially after falling for glamorous Lilian, who initiates her into the pleasures of lesbian love. Gascoine's book has its enjoyable moments, but her romanticisation of the book's central relationship and of her gay heroine in particular makes her latest "change of life" novel seem less than convincing.

■ MARRIAGE
By Gloria Nagy
Little, Brown & Company, £15.99

ANNIE and Mickey Wilder are the perfect couple. Gifted and charming, they have been married for 20 years with never a cross word and they live in California. Of course, they are heading for a fall. First Mickey — a successful television actor — decides to enliven his sex life with an affair with an artist; Annie, not to be outdone, falls madly in love with an itinerant English art dealer.

To add fuel to the fire, Mickey's accountant absconds with all their money. Annie's father dies and — just as she is about to set off for a new life in England with her lover — Annie is struck down with a terrible case of fibroids. Even the dog dies.

By the end the reader may feel he or she has strayed from social comedy into some Californian version of Greek tragedy. To make the whole thing even more preposterous, it all ends happily ever after.

CHRISTINA KONING

RECORDINGS

NEW ON CD: The legacy of Thelonious Monk; the Buck starts here; mawkish George Michael; dancing around your hardbag; Cherkassky plays Rubinstein

JAZZ

Clive Davis

■ VARIOUS ARTISTS
Blue Monk
Blue Note CDP8-35471-2★★★

DEVOTED to the ample legacy of Thelonious Monk, this journey through the archives could so easily have turned into another excuse to round up the usual suspects. Thankfully, Tony Harlow's compilation avoids the obvious choices, and finds space for a scattering of non-Monk compositions — including Stan Tracey's *Rocky Mount* — that reflect the angular influences of this eccentric composer.

So, while *Round Midnight* — probably the most recognisable of his tunes — makes two appearances, they come in the unfamiliar guise of a Babs Gonzales vocal and an orchestral setting by Gil Evans, taken from the early World Pacific album *New Bottle, Old Wine*. Eric Dolphy's *Hat and Beard* hints at Monk's role as a precursor of the 1960s avant-garde; Larry Young's duet with Elvin Jones on *Monk's Dream* and The Three Sounds' hard-driving *Straight No Chaser* represent the funkier side of the man in the funny headwear.

■ BUCK CLAYTON
A Buck Clayton Jam Session, 1975
Chiaroscuro CRD143★★

A MATTER-of-fact title for what proved to be a robust summit meeting between a group of elder statesmen — from Vic Dickenson to Joe Newman and Buddy Tate — who still had plenty of hard blowing inside of them. Clayton's insouciant horn arrangements confer just the right degree of formality, and any opportunity to hear Lee Konitz shoulder to shoulder with Earle Warren is not to be passed up lightly.

Producer Hank O'Neal has devised another astute method of augmenting the playing time. Rather than tape the musicians' reminiscences, he allows us to eavesdrop on a rehearsal of *Glassboro Blues* and *The Duke We Knew*, with Clayton calling the shots.

POP SINGLE

David Sinclair

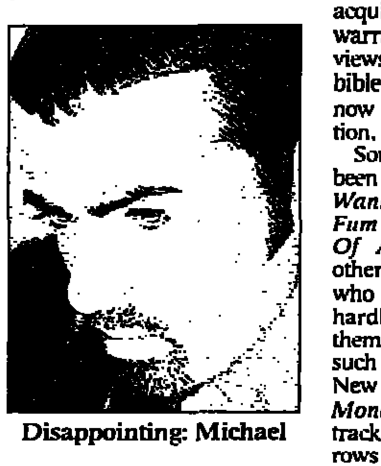
■ GEORGE MICHAEL
Jesus To A Child
Virgin VSCDXJ 1571★

GEORGE Michael's new single has been all over the radio for the past two weeks, but it won't be in the shops until January 8. This increasingly fashionable marketing ploy is designed to manipulate the public into providing a massive first-week sale and thereby produce an instant No 1 hit.

But it could turn out to be a high-risk strategy for this particular song, since potential purchasers are likely to find their initial frustration at not being able to buy *Jesus To A Child* turning into boredom the more they hear of it.

A long, maundering ballad, it suffers from a lack of direction and presence. The bittersweet lyric has a certain romantic appeal, but the message of hope comes swathed in layers of introspection and self-pity: "And what have I learned from all this pain?/I thought I'd never feel the same about anyone or anything again."

Michael is the only British star who can hold a candle to the American heavyweights bequeathed to us by the 1980s (Madonna, Prince, the Jacksons et al), so it would be premature to write him off just yet. But this doesn't sound like a very inspired start to the next phase of his career.



Disappointing: Michael

POP ALBUM

David Sinclair

■ VARIOUS ARTISTS
Enter The Hardbag
A&M 540 457★

FOR THE outsider, entering the world of dance music is like trying to unravel the secrets of a Masonic lodge. While certain dance styles have become established genres in their own right (techno, house, jungle), others remain little more than obscure buzzwords (electronica, hardfloor, digitronica) which could almost have been designed to trip up the unknowledgable or unwary.

Hardbag falls between the two. Essentially a "harder" version of handbag (the commercial mutation of house, so-called because it appeals to girls who dance around their handbags in Mecca ballrooms and the like), hardbag has acquired a status sufficient to warrant its own page of reviews in the raver's monthly bible, *Muzik* magazine, and now a double-CD compilation, *Enter The Hardbag*.

Some of the 26 tracks have been hits, including *Don't You Want Me* by Felix, *Fee Fi Fo Fum* by Candy Girls and *Son Of A Gun* by JX, a DJ otherwise known as Red Jerry, who is the nearest thing to a hardbag star. And some of them tap into familiar themes such as the hardfloor mix of New Order's classic *Blue Monday* and the Hyperlogic track *Only Me*, which borrows a sample from U2's *New Year's Day*.

But for the most part *Enter The Hardbag* is a seamless and single-minded celebration of the beat, the whole beat and nothing but the beat. Clocking in at a whopping 160 minutes, it is music that is not designed to be listened to in the conventional sense, but absorbed as a numbing soundtrack to the kind of vigorous Saturday night activities that involve a massive release of serotonin.

The committed party-goer will find this a good, no-nonsense package, but for those who seek more from their music than a few scraps of gibberish chanted over buzzy synthesizer riffs, Hi-NRG bass lines and a relentlessly mechanised four-on-the-floor beat, caution is advised.

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

■ RUBINSTEIN
Piano Concerto No 4 in D Minor; Encores
Cherkassky/RPO/
Ashkenazy
Decca 448 063-2★★★

ANTON Rubinstein was one of the great 19th-century titans: regarded by many as second only to Liszt in the pantheon of piano virtuosi, he was renowned for his heroic, massive style and his well-nigh incredible stamina. As Jeremy Siepmann's note reminds us, he thought nothing of giving three recitals in a day, and his programmes regularly exceeded three hours.

But Rubinstein was also a prolific composer: six symphonies, five piano concertos and approaching 20 operas. Only one of those operas *(The Demon)* has survived in the repertoire, though a number of other pieces are in the recording catalogue (including all the symphonies, thanks to the enterprising Marco Polo). The Fourth Piano Concerto has never been completely forgotten, but it is good to have it here on a major label and from one of the last great survivors of the Romantic tradition, Shura Cherkassky.

In compositional style, Rubinstein was an unashamed conservative. Nothing significant had happened since the death of Chopin, he opined nearly half a century later, and there is little in this concerto that could not have come from the pen of either Chopin or Schumann. But there is much to enjoy, and Cherkassky's sensitive reading, with Vladimir Ashkenazy a sympathetic orchestral accompanist, is always alive to the poetry rather than the pyrotechnics.

Cherkassky: true Romantic

So it is too with the ten encores recorded years ago and included here as a filler. Godowsky is well represented (arrangements of *Wine, Women and Song*, Saint-Saens's *The Swan* and a Schubert Moment Musical, plus his own *Alt Wien* and the Waltz-poem No 4 for left hand) and there are also confections by Tchaikovsky, Glazunov, Chaminade, Moszkowski and Rubinstein (the evergreen *Melody in F*), all served up with consummate skill and delicacy.

OPERA

John Higgins

■ MASSENET
Hérodiade
Studer/Denise/
Heppner/Hampson
Capitole de Toulouse
Orchestra/Plasson
EMI 7243 5 55378 2
(3 CDs)★★★

Fleming/Zajick/
Domingo/Pons
San Francisco Opera
Orchestra/Gergiev
Sony S2K 66847 (2 CDs)★

COVENT Garden audiences are deprived of the *Hérodiade* promised for this season because the sets, borrowed from Vienna, cannot be made to fit the stage. Disappointed Massenet followers can now turn to EMI and Sony, as the rival companies are both issuing sets made within days of one another.

Two versions of a Massenet opera which has only recently acquired much currency could seem like overkill, if that is the right word for a work which ends in John the Baptist's beheading and Salome's suicide. Fortunately it is easy to choose between the versions.

EMI took its cast into the studio and, under the hand of Massenet expert Michel Plasson, has delivered a beautifully balanced recording. Forget Richard Strauss's *Salome*. Massenet drew from neither St Matthew nor St Oscar, and for *Herodiade* turned to Flaubert's *conte* of the same name. Everyone is far less nervy and rather less nasty, while Massenet's lyrical stamp is everywhere evident in this early piece.

Herod himself sings passionately of Salome's charms in *Vision fugitive*, an aria which could have been written for Des Grieux or Werther, and Thomas Hampson delivers it with honeyed eloquence. Cheryl Studer's soprano curls high above the orchestra as Salome, who is not revealed as Hérodiade's daughter until the final curtain — a little spice to a bland plot. Nadine Secunde, in the title role, provides most of the villainy, but the real star is John the Baptist, and here Ben Heppner with his golden tone gives an interpretation to remember.

Sony's version, drawn from live performances in San Francisco, does not measure up. It is overweighted towards the orchestra and Gergiev too often sounds overbearing; in Massenet he lacks Plasson's lightness of touch. Domingo's Baptist comes into his own in the last-act prison aria, and Dolora Zajick's Hérodiade is more formidable than EMI's Nadine Secunde. Sony, by cutting some of the extensive ballet music, manages to squeeze the opera on to two CDs rather than EMI's three. But there the pluses end.

Renée Fleming cannot match the girlishness of Cheryl Studer's Salome — she had some preliminary practice with Strauss's princess. And Juan Pons's arid Herod is way below the Hampson standard. San Francisco's casting of some of the minor roles is also unsatisfactory. Toulouse under Plasson is the place where the French 19th-century repertoire blooms best.

Studer: soprano Salome

VOCAL

Hilary Finch

■ VARIOUS
Christmas Fantasy
Winchester Cathedral
Choir/BSO/Hill
Decca 444 130-2★★

THE ultimate in the English Christmas on record is offered this year by the raw, totally unprecious voices of the Winchester Cathedral Choir under David Hill. A Cotman watercolour pastoral of Howells, Holst and Warlock is framed by Vaughan Williams's 1912 *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (from the days when English folk music was being newly discovered) and Gerald Finzi's sleepy cantata *In terra pax*, inspired by a session with the bellringers of Churchdown, Gloucester.

From Herbert Howells come two carol-anthems, *A Spotless Rose* and *Sing Lullaby*; from Peter Warlock, caroller supreme, the *Capriol*-tinted *Lullaby my Jesus* and the salty Scottish *Balulalow*. Here, too, is the super-spangled *Bethlehem Down*, written at Christmas 1927. The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra takes a sidestep through the snow for Delius's Nordic *Sleigh-Ride* — shades of a Christmas party at the Griegs and a nice snifter of *Glögg* before Vaughan Williams's beery *Wassail*.

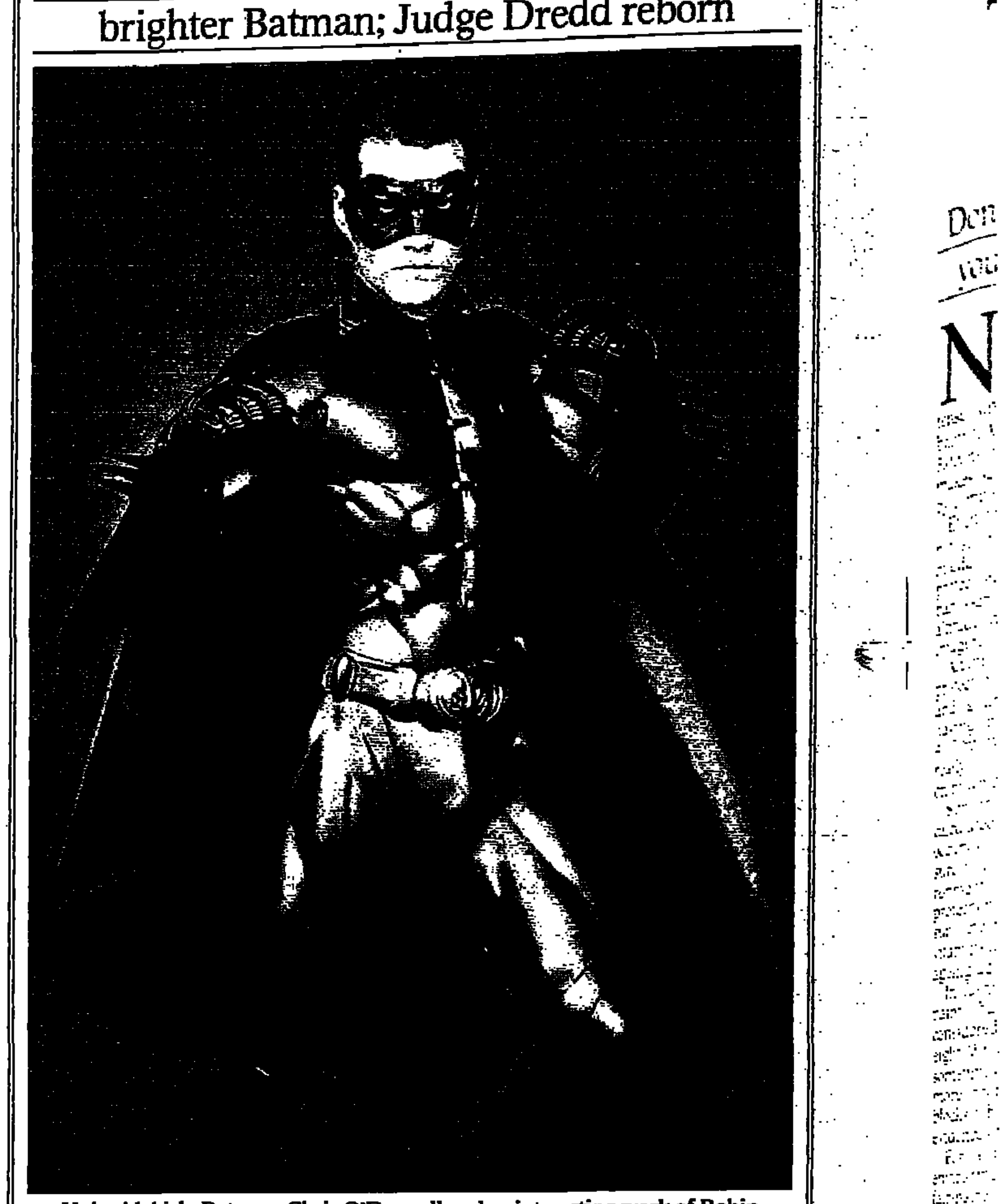
■ CHANTICLEER
Sing We Christmas
Teldec 4509 94563 2★★

THE Christmas stars are joined by distinctly transatlantic stripes in Chanticleer's compendium of seasonal merriment, from a sugar-candy *Stille Nacht* to the sensurround crooning of Georgia-born Joseph Jennings's *Glory to the Newborn King*. In between, this all-male *a cappella* group of five counter-tenors, three tenors, three baritones and a bass try their hand at Renaissance polyphony in Victoria's *O magnum mysterium* and Josquin Desprez's *O virgo virginum*. Their almost self-regardingly well-groomed blend of textures triumphs over any particularly perceptive or subtle sense of pacing or inflection here.

I preferred the roistering rhythms of their 16th-century Spanish *villancios*, *Y virgen le dezia* and *A un nino llorand*: jolly, semi-secular carols which show off the choir's kaleidoscope of counter-tenors.

★ *Worth hearing*
★★ *Worth considering*
★★★ *Worth buying*

NEW ON VIDEO: Fantasia in Arizona; a brighter Batman; Judge Dredd reborn



Holy sidekick, Batman: Chris O'Donnell makes interesting work of Robin

■ ARIZONA DREAM
PolyGram, 15, 1992

EMIR KUSTURICA'S first film to be made in America is an aggravating European-style fantasia on the American Dream. Brilliant if pointless visual conceits battle it out with improvised longueurs. Bloated fish fly through the air and fill Johnny Depp's dreams. Faye Dunaway's oversexed widow builds primitive planes that crash. Jerry Lewis dresses in pink, and ascends into the galaxy in an ambulance. Individual moments please, but you lose patience with the director's over-indulgence. Available to rent.

■ BATMAN FOREVER
Warner Home Video, PG, 1995

THE LATEST Batman adventure will surely be found in many Christmas stockings. Val Kilmer fits snugly enough into the Batsuit, but still faces Michael Keaton's old problem: having the villains steal the scenes. Jim Carrey as the Riddler is the chief culprit: beside him, even villain Tommy Lee Jones fades into the scenery. Chris O'Donnell makes interesting work of Batman's sidekick Robin, but there is not much room for Nicole Kidman, a psychologist who stands on the periphery tossing her hair. Director Joel Schumacher goes for bright colours and slam-bang action; none of Tim Burton's dark shadows here.

■ JUDGE DREDD
FoxGuild, 15, 1995

A TESTOSTERONE special from Sylvester Stallone, strutting stiffly through Mega City One as the famous comic-book hero. The hardware and special effects are beguiling for a while, but you soon tire of characters that can only sneer, or gleam with crazed villainy (like Armand Assante). Young British director Danny Cannon keeps the monster production moving forward, but has no space to offer subtlety, intelligence or visual style. A rental release.

■ MIXED NUTS
20:20 Vision, 12, 1994

JUDGING by the talents involved — Steve Martin, Madeline Kahn, writer and director Nora Ephron — you might expect constant hilarity. Ephron planned it that way, but what emerges is a wildly unfunny black farce set around the doings of a hard-pressed suicide hotline over the Christmas season. This bypassed British cinemas; I wonder why?

■ SILENT FALL
Warner, 15, 1995

DRAB murder mystery given a dubious allure by the plot's flirtation with autism and child abuse. Richard Dreyfuss is the psychiatrist trying to unlock the memory of an autistic child who saw his parents murdered. Good acting from young Ben Faulkner and 16-year-old Liv Tyler (the boy's protective sister); for the others, and director Bruce Beresford, this is one to omit from the CV. A rental release.

■ TANK GIRL
Warner, 15, 1995

TRANSFORM your head into a pinball machine by watching this hurtling, noisy vehicle for the sassy comic-book superstar. A cosmic disaster has baked the world into a wasteland, and Malcolm McDowell wants to control every last drop of moisture. Tank Girl, alias Lori Petty, takes him on with a gang of kangaroo mutants. A bruising experience.

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ALL ALONE under the Xmas tree? Wishing there were someone to share it with or perhaps to get away from it completely Cosmopolitan, charismatic, confident petite blonde with GSOH, independent but not PC, WLTM her equivalent in male form (only he should be in his fifties and not a petite blonde! preferably) Loves all the usual - country, France, cinema, food, etc. London/SE pref. Photo please to Box No 2490

ATTRACTIVE Persian/Eastern lady, yng 50, caring, petite medium slim, fair complexion, 5'2, divorced Animal lover seeks a genuine honest caring, attractive prof gentleman, 45-58 for permanent relationship. London/Surrey area Pls reply with a recent photo Box 2560

ATTRACTIVE prof lady, 38, pub sch ed, stable, affectionate, outgoing, slim, no ties, enjoys travel, politics (con), countryside, city lights WLTM similar man 36-50 to share future London, Surrey, Hants Please Reply to Box No 2465

ATTRACTIVE 50yr old, widowed, well-travelled, living and working in Kent, seeks tall gentleman, animal lover, who is financially secure, to share good sense of humour and evenings out. Please enclose photograph. Reply to Box No 2481

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RENDEZVOUS

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ATTRACTIVE lean graduate oriental lady 5'6" seeks kind, well educated gentleman, mid 30s - 40s to share good music, games, conversation, humour for permanent relationship. Bucks. Please Reply to Box No 2500

BERKSHIRE. Most men shy away from tall elegant women who are successful. Wanted, equally successful tall light hearted rugged public school man 50ish for sharing love & friendship. Photograph please. Please Reply to Box No 2540

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE based, attractive financially independent widow, early 60s, with wide and varied interests, wishes to meet intelligent gentleman, similar age group, for friendship, travel, etc. Photograph appreciated. Box 2424.

CHARMING Japanese 53, with 2 teenagers, enjoys painting, travel, walking, classical music etc Seeks intelligent, SOH and no smoking gentleman, London area Please reply with photo to Box No 2462

DARK—Haired light hearted active, fun loving, cuddly, n/s 5'2" widow, 51, seeks kind relaxed romantic man to share life, music, theatre boats, laughter, conversation & occasional silence. SE Berks Photo appreciated. Please Reply Box 2433.

GLAM Gran 58 smoker seeks gentleman gallivant W. Sussex & Spain Please reply Box 2426

GORGEOUS American, 35, successful, Ph D, seeks attractive laid back, over educated humorous gent 50ish. Send photo. Please Reply to Box No 2450.

HAPPY optimistic, warm professional, early 60s, attractive, slim, no ties, many interests, tired of being alone, hoping to find gentleman for companionship with possible life partnership. Surrey area Box 2444.

INTELLIGENT attractive professional woman, 35, seeks similar sincere man 30-45 to share good wine, cinema, travel and lazy Sundays Please Reply to Box No 2545

LOVELY lady, tall, slim, blonde, many interests, lively mind, seeks decent, educated man 50+, for friendship. Wales, Severn Bridge area. Box No 2389

OFFBEAT London female (young 51) seeks humorous friend and lover no Tories. Box No 2498

PROFESSIONAL lady, petite, brunette, very attractive, elegant, affectionate, warm personality, educated, cultured with aesthetic sensibilities Loves poetry, music, theatre, esp. France and Italy WLTM sensitive, caring, educated like minded professional man 46-55 for companionship. Please Reply to Box No 2546

PROFESSIONAL woman, 5'6", late 30's, single parent Interests: opera, theatre, balls, music, wining & dining. London area. Box No 2509

SAILING companion? Intelligent, attractive, woman artist seeks fit, amusing man, youthful 58-55 Please Reply Box 2431

VENUS Classic 1950's, top of the range, OCO, seeks considerate navigator to travel Sussex roads Photo pls to Box No 2551

WARM attractive F, young 58 adventurous, open minded WLTM soulmate/lover for committed relationship. London/SE. Reply to Box No 2530

YIPPEE! I've won the lottery. Cosmopolitan reader seeks a F.T. reader to advise and help her spend winnings Pref tall 50+, S.O.H essential. Midlands. Please Reply to Box No 2418.

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ACHALLENGE to ladies!! why write to 1 when 1 phone call introduces you to over 300 attractive, stylish men 25-69 all live Midlands. We guarantee you will join Elite 0121 386 2234

A SIMPLE letter - and life gets better? Kind, handsomish, businessman, 57 longs for friendship with kind and prettyish Surrey/Sussex lady in 30s/40s. Please Reply to Box No 2399

ATTRACTIVE tall, sporty, well travelled guy 33, seeks witty, slim lady 23-35 London/Surrey area Photo pls. Box No 2324

BIG house in the West Country, nice car, nobody to share these and other good things in life. I am 48, have my own business, highly qualified Post Graduate of the University of Life WLTM vivacious, fun loving sociable, sincere lady 28-40 for dining, weekends in the country and maybe long term relationship Photo & letter to Box 2374

ENGLISH gentleman late 50s and unpretentious but with all the right physical, cerebral and financial attributes seeks black woman with maturity, intellect and breathtaking good looks Please Reply to Box No 2429

LONELY attractive, very tall, slim, single (why?) Male of 32, quiet, gentle, easy going, open minded Seeks honest, caring, sensual female My interests include natural history, countryside, wildlife, travel and classical music Reply Box 2456

FUN LOVING good looking company director with GSOH, jewish, 43, 5'8", very solvent sporty (enjoy skiing etc) Would like to spoil and pamper affectionate female under 40 who would not normally reply to personal ads. Sorry, no mums London. Photo and phone No please to Box No 2501

OXFORD Don, 57, still believes in romantic love Does any tall slim, passionate, affectionate lady believe likewise? Photo pls & will exchange. Box 2488

PASSIONATE personable, pragmatic, successful, sensual single, athletic male seeks tall female, friend, confidante, playmate, lover to share secrets sunsets, log fires, Bollinger, Mozart, Van Morrison, hopes and dreams. South/West. Reply with photograph to Box 2400

POLISH background, single gentleman, 39, enjoys travelling dancing, walks, cinema WLTM a sincere lady with similar interests. Photo plse No 2552

SLIM very fit, 5'10" easy going 57 yr old gent in SE England seriously looking for attractive 38-48 yr old lady to share his exciting life. No chance of children, no smoking, no hangups & life will be a breeze. Must be slim, a horsewoman (drag hunting & racing) and enjoy getting up early to make the most of each lovely day This paragon should also have a sense of humour. Reply enclosing honest recent photo to Box No 2517

TALL, slim, intelligent male (46 with strong forceful personality, offers creative cuisine (not walks in the park) to unpretentious, adventurous, unfulfilled female 30's-40's Box No 2460

THOUGHTFUL Academic late 50's, disengaging from unhappy marriage as youngest children leave home, would like to meet articulate, intelligent lady to share evenings at theatre, concerts, cinema, candlelit suppers London or South West Please Reply to Box No 2541

WELL set up 50+ semi retired fellow, is looking for sympathetic London based lady of style and quality. Let's enjoy lunch and love together Box 2438

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Saving face on the slopes

Don't be mad and go out in the midday mountain sun. Protect your skin from burning rays with the best of the sun creams

DOUG SAGER

Jeremy Henwood, eight, testing out Snik's Rainbow Zinc sun-block cream and sun-block stick and Aloe Up's zinc and aloe colours

Nothing quite compares with the sensation of sizzling skin soaking up the rays under an intense alpine sun, in the cooling balm of Arctic air. A tan acquired at 3,000m has a rosy glow which makes seaside pinks look pathetic by comparison.

Even the English, however, are not so mad as to go out in the midday mountain sun without protection. Ultraviolet rays on urban skin can fry a face at high altitude quicker than you might imagine.

Alpinists go to extreme lengths to protect nose and face with masks and guards. The experience of having inner ear canals blister at 4,000m makes one wonder if there really is any portion of the anatomy on to which the sun doesn't shine.

Sun protection factors (SPF) are calculated by burn rate. If sunburn occurs within ten minutes of exposure to a specific ultraviolet environment, cream with SPF10 offers protection for 100 minutes. Today's sun creams are fortified with vitamins for the skin as well as anti-ageing agents.

In fashion terms, coloured face paints based on zinc oxide are considered naff for anyone over eight. White pastes, worn on lips or sometimes over the face, offer no more protection than other sun blocks which leave no disfiguring evidence of their application.

For a true test in the alpine environment we subjected three fair-haired and freckled children to sun creams in Verbier, a Swiss resort with one of the best sunshine records in Europe. Our testers were Jeremy Henwood, eight, Lucas Pauling, seven, and Kieran Pauling, six. Their mothers described them as quick burners, but all came home from testing whiter and more fragrant than when they left.

Your choice of sunscreen will depend more on what sort of skiing you will be doing and at what altitude, but do not be tempted to grab your summer beach-holiday leftovers from the back of the bathroom cabinet. My personal choice of specialised products is given below.

☐ **DERMATONE Skin Protector (SPF23)**
Price: £3.25 for 14g tin
This is an unusual but extremely effective protection not only against sunburn but also against wind. A Swedish formula said to be 100 per cent water free, this clear substance changes from a wax-like hardness to a gel-like viscosity according to temperature. I've found it the best all-round barrier for lips, face and forehead in freezing cold winds or blistering sun. It lasts all day, has no smell, doesn't stain clothing and works exactly as advertised.
UK distributor (01734 811 433)

☐ **AMBRE SOLAIRE UV Ski (SPF25)**
Price: £5.30 for 20ml tube
The face cream and lip salve duo packs are most potent in SPF25 maximum protection. Ambre Solaire products now claim to be "photo-stable".

Bolstered by five patents and the first short-wavelength UVA filter to be approved by the European Union for a decade, Ambre Solaire creams boast a filtration system which cannot be broken down by solar radiation during a day on skis. This claim proved impossible to test subjectively, especially when the boys objected violently to the "perfume" aroma, which adults will find flowery but distinctive.

Both the SPF25 and the **Anti Reflection Cream (SPF15)** (£5.60 for 40ml tube) took longer to rub into the skin than most other brands, but both also proved resistant to rubbing off with snow.
Available from Boots and leading sports shops

☐ **PIZ BUIN's Block (SPF20)**
Price: £6 for 40ml
This takes considerable massaging to ensure it absorbs into the skin when applied liberally. There is no definable odour and, in less than a minute, the skin feels dry to the touch. The thicker, more pasty, yellow **Glacier cream** (SPF15) (£6 for 20ml combi pack which also includes a lipstick dispenser) is my choice for work at high altitude. I found the Glacier cream did not run at all when I perspired freely climbing uphill at 3,000m.
UK distributors (01306 742 800)

☐ **SNIK RAINBOW ZINC sun-block cream (SPF20)**
Price: £6 for 12ml pot
Snik is an Austrian manufacturer of a variety of sun protection products. The boys went wild over the sun-block cream, which comes in 12ml plastic pots in all colours. Snik's **Rainbow sun-block stick (SPF20)** (£4.50) in screw-top lipstick containers was less popular: the colours were paler and the consistency thinner than those in the pots. The Rainbow zinc pots, on the other hand, are filled with thick, creamy gunk which is applied like finger paint.

Mothers may note that the snap-on-and-twist caps of the Rainbow Zinc tubs open inside pockets without provocation. Ski-jacket collars quickly take on the hues of whatever Rainbow Zinc colour has been applied to the chin, but they wash out nicely afterwards.

Snik's 15ml **First Class Cream Stick (SPF15)** (£8) comes attached to a lanyard to wear around the neck. The yellow cream applies smoothly "leaving you honey bronzed and very, very desirable", according to the package advertising. Although ignored by the boys, the Snik sun cream on a string was immediately seized upon by Mrs Henwood, who thought it the perfect thing in theory for a son likely to lose what isn't tied down. In practice, both Jeremy and Kieran managed to destroy the connection within three minutes.
UK distributor (01753 888 411)

☐ **ALOE UP Pro Sport Lotion (SPF30)**
Price: £11 for 114g tube
This was one of the longest lasting and most protective creams tested. It is a liquid white, unlike many aloe vera-based products which have a blue or green gel. I tried the Pro Sport ski touring at 3000m and found it dry to the skin. The smell is reminiscent of swimming-pools.

The **Aloe Up** 7g tubs of zinc and aloe colours (£4) did not specify a sun protection factor, although zinc should be a total sunblock. Mixed with aloe vera, the zinc oxide was not as good from the boys' point of view. The yellow, in particular, faded into the skin, and even the mauve, which was thick and bright upon first smearing, rubbed into the skin and off on to ski jackets within minutes.
UK distributor (01932 857896)

☐ **SHERPA TENSING Combi (SPF6)**
Price: about £5 for 20ml tube
The tube of cream comes with a solid stick dispenser on top for the lips. This twin application container is ideal for the pocket and is solidly secured. The white cream soaks quickly into the skin leaving no film but a curious and pleasant smell a bit like freshly planed cedar. None of the boys found this aroma attractive, but the adults did.
Not available in the UK. Sold only in Switzerland by Gaba (00 41 61721 1125)

DOUG SAGER

A guide to sheer pleasure

Where to find the most flattering and durable tights

The little black dress season is in full swing: but where are the perfect tights to set off the ensemble? I have tested a selection of sheer black tights, choosing 20 denier and under. I put them through their paces: doing the housework, travelling by British Rail to London, going Christmas shopping, and then partying. I am 5ft 3in, dress size ten — and a small to medium in hosiery.

Shiny and matt finish tights came under scrutiny, and I awarded marks out of ten for value for money and performance. Although some tights appeared cheap, they were considered bad value if they sagged or snagged by the end of the day; expensive tights were often good value because they lasted so well.

☐ **WOLFORD Individual 10 denier**
Sizes: Extra Small/Small/Medium/Large
Stockists: Major department stores. For stockists, call 0171-935 9202
Price: £15.99
Description: "10 denier, the luxury sensation. Ultra transparent."
Fibre content: 80% nylon, 19% elastane (the generic name for the trade name Lycra), 1% cotton
Comments: Unshaped, with a matt finish — good for everyday. Fitted beautifully and proved strong and comfortable — the cotton made a difference.
Rating: Value for money 9/10
Performance 10/10
Total rating: 19/20

☐ **MARKS & SPENCER Zokki Matt Tights**
Sizes: Small/Medium/Large/Extra Large
Stockists: Marks & Spencer
Price: £2.25
Description: "15 denier appearance, high stretch to fit like a second skin."
Fibre content: 80% nylon, 20% elastane
Comments: Unshaped, with a matt finish. Leg-hugging fit. Snag resistant. In good condition at the end of the day.
Rating: Value for money 10/10
Performance 8/10
Total rating: 18/20

☐ **ELBEO Luxury Sheer Satine Tights**
Sizes: Small/Medium/Large
Stockists: Major department stores. For stockists, call 01623 552500
Price: £3.99
Description: "10 denier appearance. Sheer luxury tights with a gloss appearance."
Fibre content: 89% nylon, 11% Lycra
Comments: Shaped. Reinforced toes. Very durable. Looked as good as new when I took them off.
Rating: Value 8/10
Performance 9/10
Total rating: 17/20

☐ **PRETTY POLLY Sheer Nylons Tights**
Sizes: Small/Medium/Large
Stockists: Major department stores. For stockists, call 01623 552500
Price: £3.75
Description: "10 denier appearance, sheer gloss tights for ultimate elegance."
Fibre content: 89% nylon, 11% Lycra
Comments: Shaped, with medium-high shine. Reinforced toes. Strong knit that limited damage when they did catch. Looked good at the end of the day.
Rating: Value for money 8/10
Performance 8/10
Total rating: 16/20

The best tights look good and last

☐ **CHARNOS Satin Elegance Tights**
Sizes: Small/Medium/Large
Stockists: Major department stores. For stockists, call 0171-629 1028
Price: £4.99
Description: "20 denier with Lycra."
Fibre content: 90% nylon, 8% Lycra, 2% cotton
Comments: Unshaped, with high gloss finish. Panty shaped reinforced top, with reinforced toes, but heel suitable for wearing with slingbacks. Best for evening because of their glossy finish.
Rating: Value for money 6/10
Performance 8/10
Total rating: 14/20

☐ **TESCO Plain knit tights with Lycra (3 pack)**
Sizes: One size (107cm-122cm)
Stockists: Tesco branches.
Price: £2.75 for three pairs
Description: "10 denier, sheer leg, reinforced body and toe."
Fibre content: 96% nylon, 4% elastane.
Comments: Unshaped, with matt finish. Cycling shorts-shaped reinforced top and toes, but sheer heel, suitable for wearing with slingbacks. Good snag resistance. Cheap and cheerful standby.
Rating: Value for money 7/10
Performance 5/10.
Total rating: 12/20.

☐ **COUTURE Sensational Satin Sheer Tights with Lycra**
Sizes: Small to large
Stockists: Good chemists and department stores. For stockists, call 01455 272322
Price: £3.99
Description: "Sheer throughout."
Fibre content: 85% nylon, 15% Lycra
Comments: Shaped, with high gloss. Sheer to the waist, with reinforced toes, but heel suitable for wearing with slingbacks. Bagged a little at the ankle after a couple of hours.
Rating: Value for money 6/10
Performance 5/10
Total rating: 11/20

☐ **CHRISTIAN DIOR Diorella Lycra Tights**
Sizes: One size
Stockists: Good chemists and department stores. For stockists, call 01455 272322
Price: £1.99
Description: "15 denier sheer plain knit."
Fibre content: 95% nylon, 5% elastane
Comments: Unshaped, with uneven finish. Heel suitable for wearing with slingbacks. Mesh-style construction gave a mottled effect. Developed a small hole a couple of hours. Cheap and cheerful.
Rating: Value for money 5/10
Performance 4/10
Total rating: 9/20

☐ **KNICKERBOX Satin Nylons**
Sizes: Small/Medium/Large
Stockists: Knickerbox. For stockists, call 0171-284 1744
Price: £2.99
Description: "Sheer lustrous legs, 10 denier."
Fibre content: 86% nylon, 14% Lycra
Comments: Shaped hosiery with medium shine. Reinforced toes. Unattractive cycling shorts-shaped reinforced top. Snagged easily when pulled on and the slightest touch damaged them. By the end of a day they were ready to be binned.
Rating: Value for money 2/10
Performance 4/10
Total rating: 6/20

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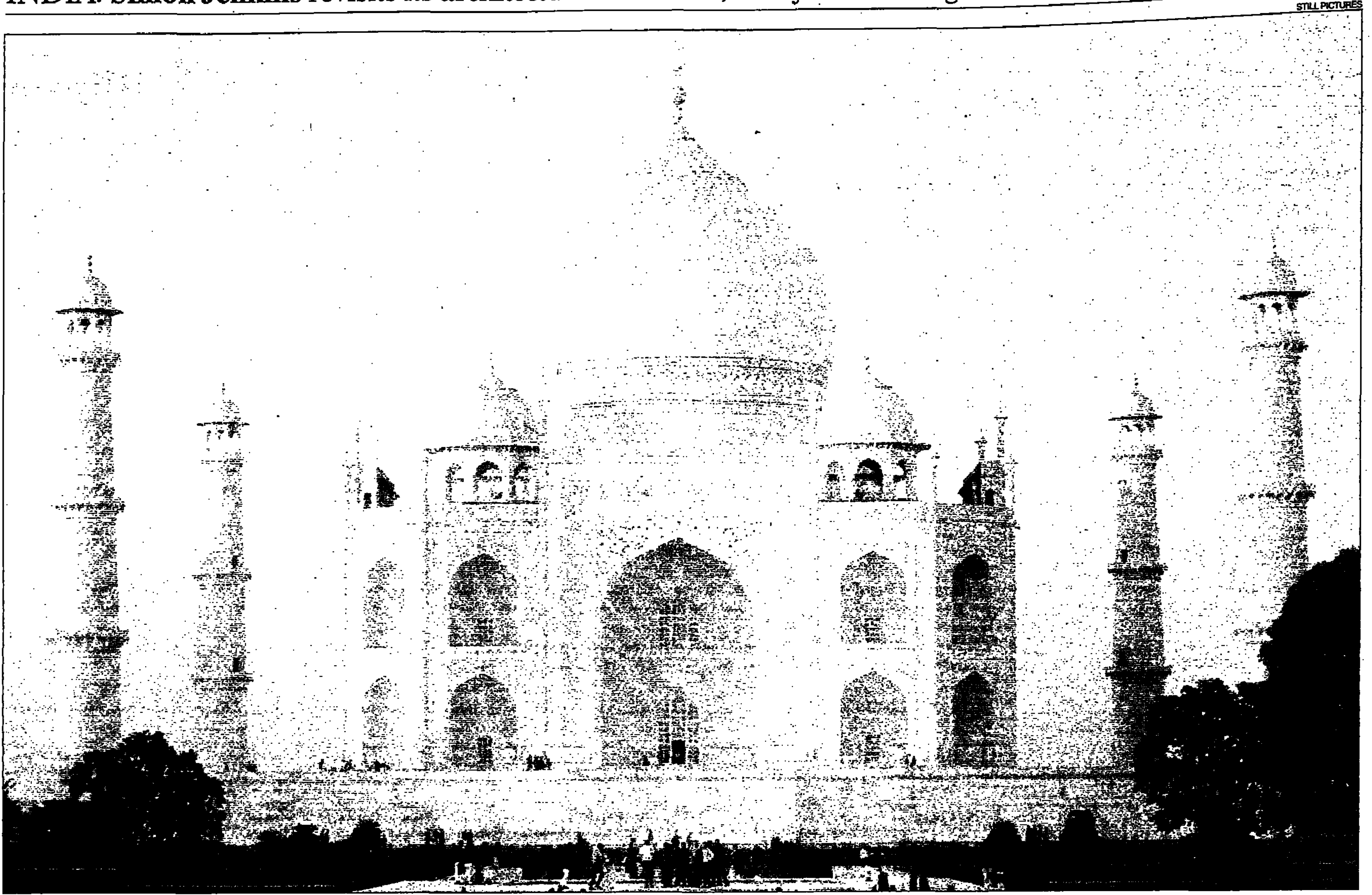
INDIA: **Simon Jenkins** revisits its architectural treasures, many of them neglected, and fears for their future

STILL PICTURES



While historic buildings elsewhere in India are neglected and rotting to dust, the Taj Mahal is fighting for survival against pollution, saved by the tourist-cash value of its beauty, and with plenty of craftsmen to keep it in repair

The tarnishing of the Taj

India must look to its laurels. After being closed at night for several years, restricting the viewing of its splendour by moonlight, the Taj Mahal can no longer even be entered through the great arch. It must be approached through a metal detector. The Golden Triangle of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur is polluted almost beyond endurance, worse than Los Angeles or Cairo. Kashmir and the northeast provinces are out of bounds. The historic buildings of Calcutta and Madras are rotting to dust. The charm of the place is in danger of draining away — and this has nothing whatsoever to do with its poverty.

The Taj still defies any reaction other than awe. It will, I am sure, survive. It was designed to defy flood and earthquake. The cash value of its beauty should protect it from terminal damage. There are craftsmen aplenty to keep it in repair.

India's other historic monuments face a more uncertain fate. They are dispersed and many are crumbling: Rajput forts on distant mountains, exotic temples in desert or bush, great Raj mansions decaying unloved in newly rich cities.

The draw of India lies not just in the beauty of its antiquities but in their setting, in the harmony of street, temple, fort and hill. India is about atmosphere, that capacity to evoke from even the most casual visitor not just admiration but enduring love.

Indians protest that such talk is code for keeping them poor. That is nonsense. Wealth is not the enemy of conservation, as the cities of Europe show. Nor does conservation require wealth. It requires the political will to enforce planning control and to ensure that tourist revenue goes into safeguarding what tourists come to see, not into the pockets of the already rich.

India's poverty does not stop its presidents and ministers living in regal splendour. It does not prevent Calcutta's communists keeping the former Governor's mansion immaculate and to themselves, closed to the public. Most historic buildings in India are being destroyed by the rich, not the poor.

More to the point, India wants tourists. It hopes to attract more than two million next year. International airports are being opened in Agra, Jaipur and Bangalore. The number of charter flights, mainly to Goa, has risen from 200 in 1992 to more than 1,000 last year.

There are "action plans" for hotels, roads, faster transport, but scarcely any mention of conserving the India that the tourists were coming to see.

Indian cities have been transformed over the past decade. They are less cameos of picturesque poverty, more object lessons in how any community should plot its path to prosperity and not leave market forces unchecked. They are becoming more and more the same, mimicking the tawdry townscapes of African and Latin-American conurbations, and equally racked by corruption.

Agra, in addition to its industry, is home to three of India's most lovely structures: the Taj, Agra Fort and the tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah. The Taj is in a league of its own, and most foreign tourists would be content to see it and go home. Once charter flights to Agra start next year, many will be able to do just that.

More tourists will also visit Delhi, a city barely recognisable from a decade ago. Lutyens's palace remains closed to the public. The villas and bungalows of his garden city are being demolished and replaced by office blocks and flats. The Red Fort and old city retain their scruffy bustle, but are enveloped in choking exhaust fumes from which even the most indulgent lover of Indian street life must recoil.

Jaipur, the third city of the Golden Triangle, is similarly blighted. Its province of Rajasthan hopes to become one of Asia's great tourist venues. But will tourists have the time or inclination to drive for hours to isolated forts and temples when the walled cities have crumbled away and what remains has been marinated in carbon monoxide?

Ten years ago Jaipur was a magic place of pink walls, bullock carts, rickshaws and jewel traders squatting on carpets. No more. Unchecked motorbikes, vans, taxis and cars pollute every street and alley in the old city. Only the maharajah's palace emerges clean from the jams and smog. Visitors should hurry out to the great fort at Amber or move on down to Udaipur or way out west to Jaisalmer.

To argue that Rajasthan must accept desecration and ugliness as the price of prosperity is patronising and wrong. Yet what other argument can have motivated the new tourist hotel overlooking the 7th-century temples at Nagda outside Udaipur? The hotel will destroy the tranquillity of the temples, which in turn will destroy the point of the hotel.

Likewise, at secluded, exquisite Orchha in Madhya Pradesh, two hotels have been built between the ancient palace and its temples on the once-idyllic bank of the river. Orchha may need the money and jobs, but for how long will it keep them? Like the now-bankrupt hotels of the Costa Brava, such smash-and-grab development kills the geese with the golden eggs.

India's great cities need to show that they can attract visitors. For what attracts visitors also attracts the investment that India has decided it desperately needs. It is no coincidence that the two cities that are palpably booming, Bombay and Bangalore, are also the most carefully tended and civilised in which to live. Bombay will, I believe, be one of the showpieces of Asia in the next century. It already feels that way. With a dozen Victorian monuments worthy of London's St Pancras (including the finest station anywhere) and some 200 buildings listed for preservation, Bombay's government is coming to understand that guarding its historic character is as important to business as to passing tourists. Nor does it regard relics of the Raj as of some foreign power: they were and are the true Bombay.

Would that the same could be said of Calcutta. Calcuttans shamefully neglect their no-less-splendid inheritance, muttering always that they are too poor for fine buildings. One reason, perhaps the chief reason, why Calcutta is so poor is that it disregards its appearance. Poverty is no reason for the hideous spread of advertising hoardings or for rich property owners to ignore maintenance.

Behind the grime, overcrowding and corruption, Calcutta is beautiful, but its beauty is sinking into its gutters.

I wish I could say otherwise of Madras. Here at Independence was an intact compound of early classical buildings with, next door, a magnificent governor's house and estate. This area was surrounded by handsome Victorian boulevards and public buildings appropriate to the southern capital of the Raj: magnificent law courts, a splendid station, the "Indo-Saracenic" university overlooking the beach.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has driven an elevated railway across the garden in front of the Governor's house, a building that must itself be close to collapse. Advertising hoardings have gone up round every open space. A Soviet-style office block stands in the middle of Fort St George. Half of the Gothic Spencers store has been demolished for a shopping arcade. This lack of care reinforces rather than combats poverty.

Madras is being superseded by Bangalore as India's fourth city and the base for industrial growth in the south. Bangalore's shady streets and well-tended gardens are in marked contrast to the terrible changes being wrought on Madras. Rather than compete by restoring and boasting of its history, Tamil as well as Raj, Madras seems set on a path to Latin-American ugliness.

As its most passionate historian, S. Mutiah, remarks grimly in his book on the city: "Madras is the past trying to catch up with the present." But sadly not with the future.

Historic buildings are regarded by the Indian Government as "given", a seam of gold that can be mined for tourist revenue but will never give out. They need no protection or maintenance. While hotels have become expensive, historic sites are mostly free and dejected. They are supposedly "protected" but that is no security against a bribe in the right quarter, as the fate of Delhi's decaying medieval step-wells indicates.

The Indian Archaeological Survey, notionally charged with protecting the nation's monuments, must be the most oppressed of bureaucracies. It was once granted a quarter of the two-rupee entrance fee to the Taj. When the peak-hours fee went up to 100 rupees, its share was left at half a rupee.

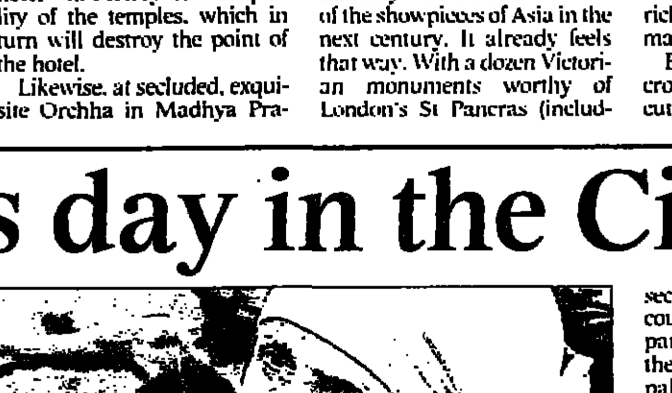
I believe that most of Asia is fast becoming a historical desert. From Bangkok to Singapore, from Hong Kong to Tokyo, governments have permitted the spoliation of their past. Some cities, such as Singapore, are regretting this and are trying to create artificial historic districts. They have found that not just tourists but businessmen do not like coming to identical townscapes from which all distinctive character has been squeezed. They notice that in Europe urban wealth can be associated with historic buildings — in Paris, Geneva, Barcelona, even London.

The unconstrained redevelopment of American downtowns is not the path to stable prosperity. Tourists avoid them. Locals flee them not just for holidays but eventually for homes and businesses.

India keeps its magnetism. No other country has such a quantity of beauty on display, human as well as physical. Here is the only great civilisation outside Europe whose history can still be witnessed in brick and stone.

India is infinitely precious. It is now infinitely fragile.

Christmas day in the City of Joy



Mother Teresa invariably singles out children for attention

The city of Calcutta turned out to be hotter, dirtier, dustier and yet a far more dynamic place than Dominique Lapierre's *City of Joy* had led me to believe. With a mixture of prurient interest and mounting horror, I had ploughed through her tale of Calcutta slum-dwellers on the train journey from New Delhi. The previous day, a bomb planted on the Calcutta-New Delhi express had exploded, injuring several passengers, and destroying the coach into which I been booked. The resulting reshuffle and heightened security measures did little to calm my nerves, already frazzled by the prospect of arriving alone, at night, in the city euphemistically known as the "Black Hole".

As I stepped off the train into Howrah railway station, the violent assault on my senses that I had so vividly expected never materialised. Like any railway station, or any public place in India, Howrah was full of noise and colour and confusion, pulsating with primal energy, and awash with bodies — sari-clad women squatting on their haunches and surrounded by chapattis and curries; thin, anaemic-looking men lying prostrate on the ground; and wide-eyed, tremulous children.

But there was an unexpectedly buoyant atmosphere, too, far removed from the claustrophobia that a city like the holy Benares, for example, induces, where the weary traveller is immediately besieged by the betel-stained smirks and wild-eyed stares of "holy" men and rickshaw drivers. In contrast, Howrah, with its fleet of yellow cabs, and smartly dressed corps of luggage wallahs, seemed reassuringly familiar. My initial fears greatly allayed, I settled down to explore this sprawling city which, on first impression, seemed not unlike New York. With the upbeat atmosphere of a thriving metropolis, a wide range of film and theatre offerings, art exhibitions, an international book fair, and an affluent, middle-class population noted for its intellectual leanings, the birthplace of Nobel prize-winning poet Rabindranath Tagore has acquired a reputation as the Left Bank of India.

Architectural splendours such as Raj Bhavan, the old British Government House, and Tollygunge, the exclusive sports club in the suburbs, add to the city's façade of grandeur.

It is impossible, however, to ignore the spectre of decay and poverty that infiltrates even the most elegant quarters of Calcutta. Discomforted by the sight, I tried hard to avoid eye contact with the beggars who clung to every street corner. I side-stepped rats, the repulsive sight of flies swarming around freshly cut meat on a butcher's stall, gutters overflowing with refuse, and the weary pleadings for alms of mothers cradling their young.

Though I never saw the slums described in the *City of Joy*, the streets of Calcutta rang out with the cry of the destitute and, in need of a spiritual balm, I set off for Mother Teresa's headquarters.

The Motherhouse, a large, ugly, grey concrete building off a busy main road and home to the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, is an unlikely, modest abode for someone regarded as a saint. The Sisters quietly hurry to and fro, pausing here and there to utter a silent prayer or welcome the visitors, who often arrive by the coachload.

When Mother Teresa descends from her curtained-off office on the second floor to hold court in the homely parlour downstairs, the excitement is palpable. Clad in blue-and-white sari and sandals, Mother (as she is known) reaches out her tiny, bent frame to bless those around her. Invariably, she singles out the children for special attention. The Sisters, shrewdly, steer potential donors in her direction.

After a half-hour or so, Mother disappears, leaving in her wake a collective sigh of contentment. The aura of love and compassion that emanates from her is difficult to describe. Though she has been the target of criticism — branded a "religious imperialist" and lambasted for her anti-abortion stance — few who have met her can deny the power of her presence.

I, too, succumbed to her warmth, and recall the affection in her eyes when, on the joyous Christmas Day I was there, she hugged and blessed the children of Shishu Bhavan, the orphanage run by her mission, much to their obvious delight.

I came to know this gentler side of Calcutta in some depth as my intended three-week stay stretched into three and a half months. Drawn back to the orphanage, I ended up a volunteer there, and was catapulted into a way of life far removed from my own in London.

The children of Shishu Bhavan, though bowed down by malnutrition, polio, cerebral palsy and a host of other afflictions, were heartbreakingly affectionate. Hardly surprising, I suppose, given the unbroken monotony of their days, which revolved around meals, prayers and naps, and only the occasional treat. But the joy and happiness they expressed at the smallest of attentions gave me enormous pleasure, and awakened whatever latent maternal urges I may have harboured.

Such was my contentment in those precious days that I rarely indulged in any conventional sightseeing. But, after one stifling hot, sleepy afternoon spent in the Victoria Memorial staring glazed-eyed at the portraits of past colonial masters, it dawned on me that Calcutta's most glorious and impressive sights are those that are free and, like much of Calcutta itself, ultimately life-enhancing.

And what are those glorious sights? The Maidan park filled with picnicking families and cricketers on a Sunday afternoon, the bustling Muslim district where goat curry is served to the unsqueamish, the fluorescent night markets, the jostling queues outside the cinemas (record-breaking when Sharon Stone bared all in *Basic Instinct*) and the garlanded temples and shrines that shimmer with incense.

JINI REDDY

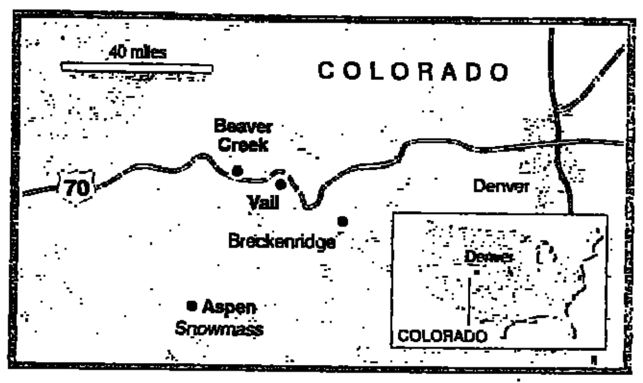
هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الاصل

SKIING IN AMERICA: Colorado's many and varied attractions give European resorts a run for their money

Rub sticks with the stars

■ Aspen and Vail, bitter rivals and each entitled to claim the crown of America's best ski resort, have now joined to market themselves as the ideal Colorado two-resort holiday. Philip Webster and Graham Duffill compared what each has to offer.



A first visit to Aspen swiftly explodes the myths. The old mining town has secured the reputation over the years as one of those places where celebrities go to be seen, travelling privately by Lear jet, bedecked in long furs and expensive jewellery — and that's only the men. This, surely, was the place for posers. The expectation was of comfortable, neatly groomed slopes, the sort of terrain on which skiers of modest ability could shine. The stars would not risk making fools of themselves on the tough stuff.

Wrong. Aspen Mountain, or Ajax, as the hill above the main town is known, has some of the best expert skiing in America. True, the other three resorts that make up the Aspen ski area, Buttermilk, Snowmass and Aspen Highlands, are for beginners and intermediates.

But Aspen itself, with 65 per cent of the runs labelled as most difficult or expert, is a long way from being a push-over, and makes no concessions to the inexperienced skier.

Although the selection of blue runs taking you from the top to the backdoor of the elegant Little Nell Hotel are usually in superb condition, even they are surprisingly steep and fast. Uncertain skiers do not enjoy them. For the improving skier, though, they provide an excellent training ground.

But the true challenges of Ajax come from the plethora of testing tracks through the generous supply of trees across the mountain and the short but sheer bump runs such as Bear Paw, Short Snort and Perry's Prowl that fall away from Ruthie's Run, the wonderfully flowing piste that is also America's World Cup downhill course. Those preferring a long, difficult mogul run through the woods can enjoy Gentleman's Ridge and the delightful Jackpot.

COLORIFIC

The former mining town attracts a glamorous clientele

There are only eight lifts on the mountain but there is plenty of skiing here. The mountain is served by the excellent Silver Queen Gondola which takes you from bottom to top in under 15 minutes.

The good performer will happily spend several days on Ajax. It will not take them long to realise that something, mercifully, is missing. There is no constant swish of the snowboard here. The practice is banned on Ajax.

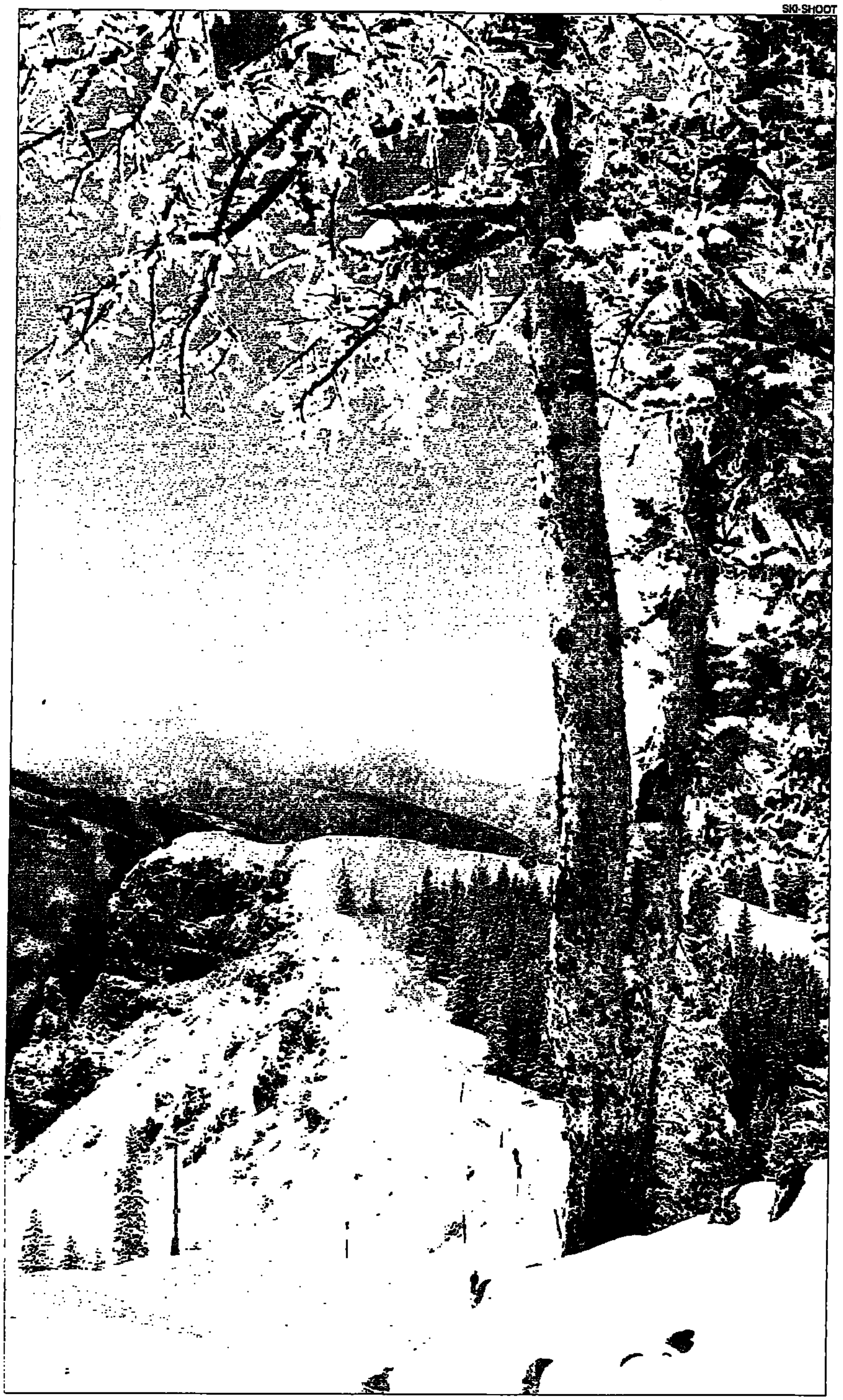
Aspen Highlands provides a pleasant contrast. Instead of the sleek gondola, a succession of old chairlifts swing you slowly to the top of the mountain. As on Ajax the best of the skiing is seriously difficult. There are some beginner trails but it also has a series of steep and deep mogulled chutes called Steeple Chase which are as tough as anything on the main mountain.

Aspen is aware of its expensive image and knows that it needs to attract more than the wealthy. It cannot afford to lose its glitzy tag but it must not price out the average skier. A few dollars were even knocked off the ski pass last year.

In truth it can be skied almost as cheaply as other big American resorts. You don't have to stay at the Little Nell or the Jerome, although you will want to visit both: indeed your chances of getting in the former are virtually nil. But there are perfectly ordinary shops and perfectly ordinary restaurants. For cheaper accommodation there are plenty of lodges and condos on the edge of town.

PHILIP WEBSTER

SKI-SHOOT



Aspen Mountain, or Ajax, as the hill above the main town is known, has some of the best expert skiing in America

Sheer Bliss or the Big Burn?

STAYING in Snowmass is an alternative worth considering for families, or those who prefer a spacious condominium and ski-in ski-out convenience, *Graham Duffill writes.*

Snowmass is the farthest-flung from Aspen mountain, 12 miles away, separated by Tiehack and Aspen Highlands, but is bigger than the other three areas put together.

With new base lifts lowering the resort's bottom level it now has the greatest vertical difference of any Colorado resort from 8,200ft to 12,300ft (2,500m to 3,750m). The longest run, Big Burn to Fanny Hill, is just over four miles.

Like Ajax and Aspen Highlands, the pitch of the mountain is not gentle, and 38 per cent of Snowmass's 72 runs are classified as most difficult or expert. Equally, it is ideal for families, with 10 per cent classified as easiest or green, while Aspen has none, and 51 per cent as blue.

There is steep skiing in the trees and down chutes in the High Alpine and Big Burn areas, but I found the wide-open slopes below Sheer Bliss a delight to cruise fast.

With 2,500 acres, Snowmass is one of the largest ski areas in North America. And finding variety on the mountain is unlikely to be a problem. Snowmass Village has a shopping mall and aims to be a complete resort, but at night it is quiet, and the lively will hanker after Aspen. A shuttle bus runs between the resorts at ten-minute intervals during peak ski hours and 30 minutes for the rest of the day.

For intermediates, Big Burn is a cruising paradise with a satisfying variety of terrain. The easiest intermediate skiing is from the Elk Camp lift, with runs through spruce trees. The Naked Lady lift gives access to more difficult slopes, including moguls.

The more advanced skiing on Snowmass is in the sector called Sam's Knob and, for those prepared to walk a little, the Hanging Valley wall which has tree skiing deep enough to satisfy the most ambitious.

● *Snowmass is included under the standard lift pass for the area covering Aspen, Aspen Highlands, and Tiehack. Children six and under ski free, the pass is $162 (about £110) for seven to 12-year-olds, and above that, children pay full price.*

The village people

Publicity material mentions Vail's charming centre built in the style of a typical Tyrolean village. However, I have yet to come across an Austrian village which extends along three junctions of a motorway — Interstate 70 in this case. It's even bigger than Innsbruck.

The first exit along Interstate 70 from Beaver Creek is Lionshead, where the runs are named after jungle themes such as Born Free and Pride. Lionshead is not the farthest-flung part of Vail — that is Cascade village — although many Vail skiers prefer to stay in the more expensive Beaver Creek ten miles away or Arrowhead, a collection of luxury chalets.

For the main ski areas you take the second exit, Vail village, where the resort is sandwiched between the motorway and the slopes.

The third exit is for East Vail, which ends the three-mile stretch of conurbation. Many British package tour operators have accommodation on the fringes of Vail, especially in East Vail.

There is a free bus service that shuttles between the various components that make up Vail, up to two million visitors a year enjoy skiing in East Vail or Lionshead.

Vail village is car-free and could almost pass for Austria in the dark, except there are too many fairy lights. In daylight, however, it appears Disneyesque.

The lift system is the Vista Bahn, a fast, four-man chairlift, which can eat up people — up to 16,000 a day — and spread them over a mountain area so large they disappear. On the Vista Bahn in the morning and at Mid-Vail at lunchtime, they all seem to come together.

Lunch at Mid-Vail is the art of balancing a tray of fries and cola while weaving through 5,000 other people who are all doing the same thing in an aircraft hangar.

At the Hyatt guests have their ski boots warmed for them

The reason skiers love the area becomes apparent when you reach the summit at 3,430m. The frontside offers good intermediate runs, mainly red, interspersed with a few blacks, and tree-lined pistes.

Over the top of the Summit lies Vail's eight bowls: Inner Mongolia, Outer Mongolia, Siberia, China, Sun Up, Sun Down, Game Creek and Tea Cup. Two more, Pete's Bowl and Super Bowl, will be opened ready for the World Championships which Vail will host in 1999.

The bowls are virtually treeless and un-pisted, apart from China where they run the piste machines down the middle to give intermediates a chance to get in. China Bowl is enormous and you can ski anywhere you want, the slope funelling down to one very long, very slow, four-man chair, Orient Express.

Sun Up and Sun Down are equally large and served by another long lift, High Noon. The bowls cover 2,734 acres and will keep most advanced skiers happy for a few days.

Although Vail is big, it is no more ungainly in size than the many Courchevels tacked on to Val Thorens and Méribel and much more beautiful. And for all its borrowed charm, it compares very favourably to the French super-resorts.

If Vail is for the masses Beaver Creek, ten miles to the west, is for the stars.

It may be only a quarter the size of its illustrious neighbour with its incomparable back-bowls, but it can be an awful lot more fun to ski. If the crowds at Vail become too oppressive, and the restaurant queues too long, take a trip down the road. That appears to be the verdict of those who can afford to choose.

Beaver Creek is intimate and discreet. The locals tell you, ever so quietly, that when the Princess of Wales went to Colorado to ski last year it was Beaver Creek that her entourage selected because of the privacy it could offer.

The resort pampers. A pleasingly designed collection of new buildings and stylish shops have an aura of wealth. At the imposing Hyatt Regency guests have their ski boots warmed for them, and rest in the evening beside roaring fires. No one is forced to walk anywhere. The resort lays on transport to the slopes, or anywhere else.

Since it opened some 15 years ago, Beaver Creek has always been associated with luxury and elegance. But the ski area itself has been laid out to suit all grades. It was the first to have its slopes designed by computer, which gave the planners an idea of the finished scheme before they started to cut down the trees.

The inexperienced have nothing to fear. From the summit at 3,490m down to the mid-station Spruce Saddle area are some ideal confidence-building runs for those who like to be at the top, but on easy terrain. For the intermediate and advanced skier there is a plethora of tough tracks cutting through the trees, which sometimes seem almost too close. For experts, the diamond black Birds of Prey runs — Goshawk, Peregrine and Golden Eagle — are a must: and the "bomber" will love Centennial, the World Championship downhill run.

GRAHAM DUFFILL AND PHILIP WEBSTER

Skiing in Colorado

☐ The authors were guests of Vail Associates and Northwest Airlines.

☐ The Premier Passport ski lift pass covers both Aspen and Vail and entitles the holder to a free one-way transportation in the mini-buses between the resorts, which are two hour's drive apart. The ticket needs to be bought from a tour operator in the UK before leaving. A ten-day pass costs $430 (about £285).

The Premier Value Coupon provides no inter-resort transport but gives a 10 per cent discount on a minimum five-day lift ticket. A ski pass covering Vail and Beaver Creek costs $162 (about £108) for six days.

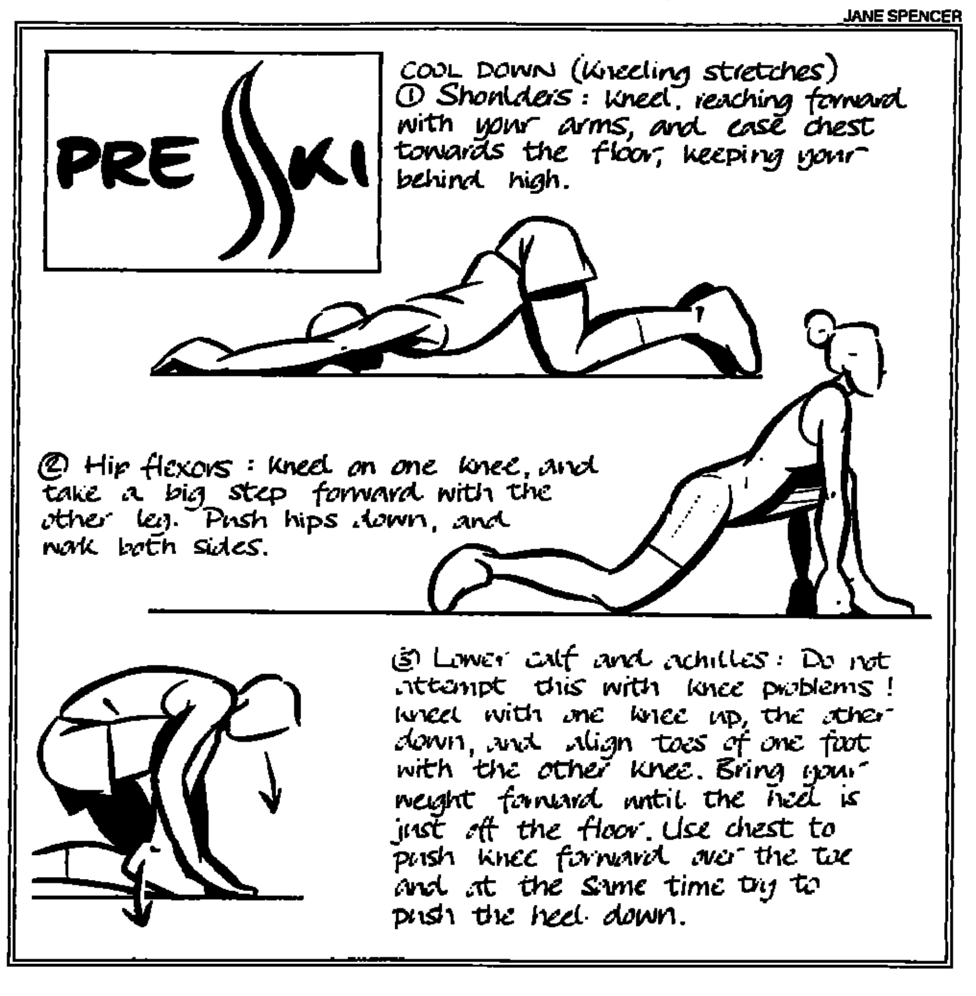
Northwest (01293 561000) has special promotional prices on its scheduled weekday service to Vail from £346 return to £564 return from December 25 until March 28 plus £31 airport tax. Weekend flight supplement is £9 per person each way. After March 28 fares go up to £444. Friday flights depart Gatwick at noon via Minneapolis and arrive at 9.20pm. Saturday flights depart Gatwick at 12.50pm via Detroit arriving at 8.22pm in Eagle.

Crystal (0181-399 5144) has five chalets in East Vail with mid-January half-board prices around £600, including scheduled flights. Ski the American Dream (0181-552 1201) has the three-star Vail Village Inn from £825 a week B&B: The Ski Company, part of Abercrombie & Kent (0171-730 5551), has a chalet, the Buffer Creek Lodge, from £599 in early January, excluding flights.

In Aspen, Crystal (0181-399 5144) has prices in early January including flights through Denver and accommodation in the five-star Ritz Carlton at £609, four-star Grand Aspen Hotel at £519 and the three-star Innsbruck Inn at £599. Only the latter is for a double room, the others are sharing three or four adults per room with hefty supplements if fewer share. In Snowmass they have the Pokoldi Lodge from £509, based on four sharing, and in Aspen Highlands two catered chalets for £609-£629 for half-board.

Ski The American Dream (0181-552 1201) prices in January including flights are: Ritz Carlton £935, self-catering two bed condo £765: Hotel Aspen B&B £719. In Snowmass they have the Snowmass Lodge and Club with two-bedroom self-catering villas £855 per head for four sharing.

JANE SPENCER



COOL DOWN (Kneeling stretches)
① Shoulders: Kneel, reaching forward with your arms, and ease chest towards the floor, keeping your behind high.

② Hip flexors: Kneel on one knee, and take a big step forward with the other leg. Push hips down, and work both sides.

③ Lower calf and achilles: Do not attempt this with knee problems! Kneel with one knee up, the other down, and align toes of one foot with the other knee. Bring your weight forward until the heel is just off the floor. Use chest to push knee forward over the toe and at the same time try to push the heel down.

● From *Skilegs*, by Tessa Coker, available from the Ski Club of Great Britain, 118 Eaton Square, London SW1W 9AF, £2.50 including p&p. *The Times* cannot be held responsible for any injuries resulting from or sustained while carrying out the exercises and movements described.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 21

RITSU

(a) A Buddhist sect of the early Tang period, introduced in the 8th century to Japan where it flourished, concerned primarily with the study of monastic discipline and ordination rites. From the Japanese word for law, especially moral law. "The Ritsu sect did not trouble much about doctrinal questions, but paid special attention to discipline and correct spiritual succession."

PREDATIVE

(b) A rare alternative for *predatory*, formed from the Latin *praeda* loot, *praedāri* to plunder, + -*ive* by analogy with *native*, *passive* etc. D. H. Lawrence, *Virgin & Gipsy*, c. 1925: "She [sc. the gipsy-woman] was just a bit wolfish. 'Good-morning, my ladies and gentlemen,' she said, eying the girls from her bold, predative eyes."

RUPESTRAL

(a) A rock plant, growing on rocks, from the Latin *rupes* a rock or boulder.

OBOSOM

(c) In the religious system of the Ashanti peoples of Ghana, a general name for any of the many gods inferior to the Supreme Being. The Ashanti name. Plural *abosom*. "The occasions which I was privileged to attend, culminating in a cult or fetish dance for a local obosom, or protective spirit, were simple and moving."

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MICRONESIA: **Martin Popplewell,** who made news living as a castaway, returns to the islands as a tourist

Where jellyfish never sting

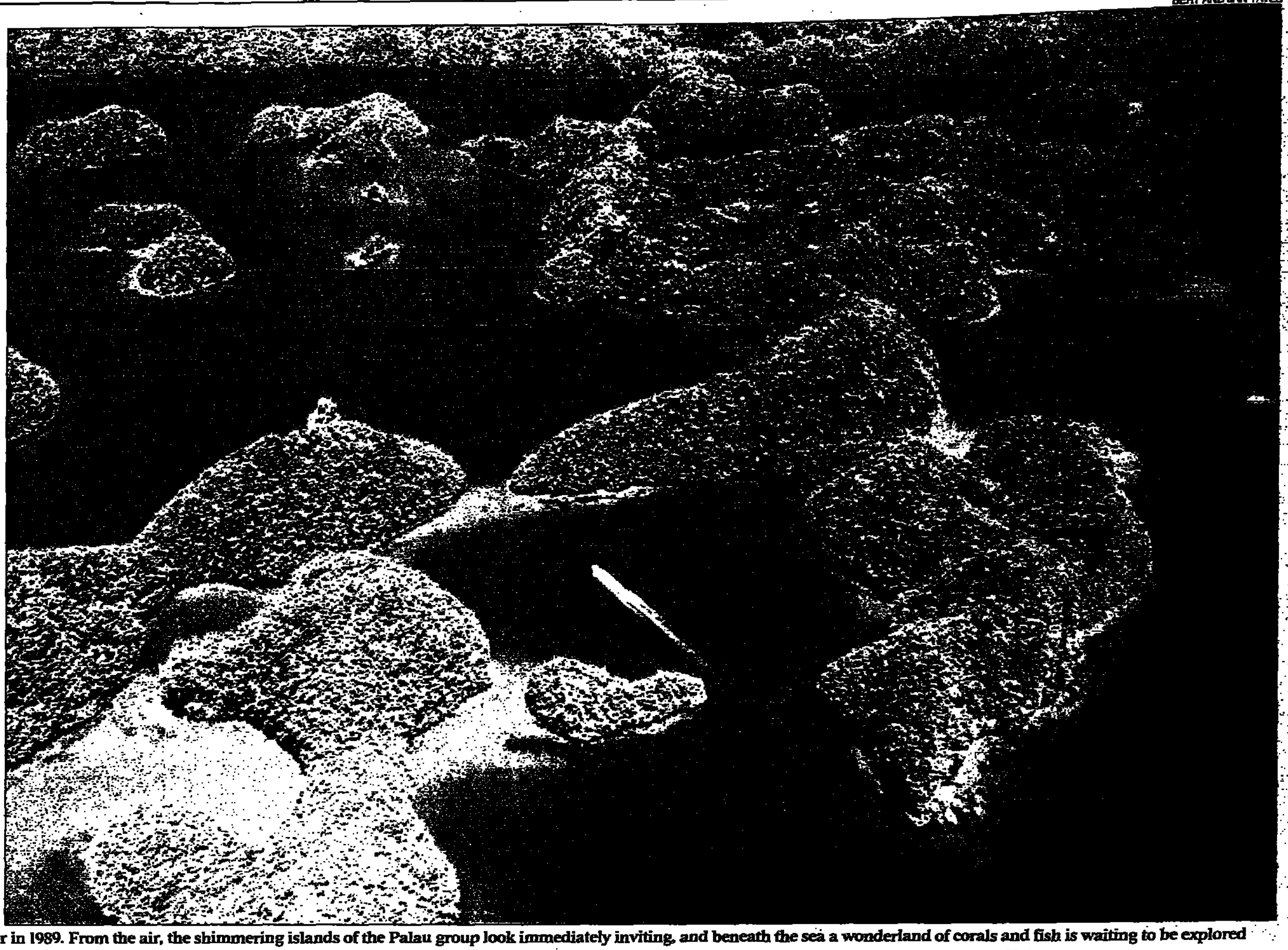
■ I was 15 years old when I first saw the film *The Blue Lagoon*. From then I had one aim in life: to live on an uninhabited Pacific island, with just one woman for company. Six years ago, when I was 18, in my year out before university, I realised that dream.

The story caught Fleet Street's imagination. We were chased across the world by reporters who invaded our "desert island". I even gave a live TV interview from the Pacific on *Wogan*. It was that adventure which first introduced me to the islands of Micronesia.

After six years away, I returned to Micronesia last month, this time as a tourist.

MAIL NEWSPAPERS

BERT AND JAN YATES



Going native: The author in 1989. From the air, the shimmering islands of the Palau group look immediately inviting, and beneath the sea a wonderland of corals and fish is waiting to be explored

PALAU

I WAS 60ft foot below the surface of the Pacific, clinging on to a coral outcrop and forced to forget all the rules about never touching the reef. I, and my fellow divers, had no choice: the current was racing over us so fast that I was convinced my mask was going to be torn off.

It didn't take me long to decide that my trip to Palau was going to be worth it for this one dive alone. I was at Blue Corner — the reef dive many consider to be the best in the world.

The exhilaration of the racing current only added to the spectacle around me. Dexter, my friendly Palauan guide, had told me to look above, behind and below when diving Blue Corner. I did. Never have I seen so many fish. Someone once said that it was as if a bomb had gone off releasing millions of fish in the process.

Triggers, butterfly fish, snappers and a school of moorish idols clouded the water; I saw so many different species within a few minutes that it was difficult to keep count. Just off the coral shelf, a large school of more than a 100 silvery barracuda hung effortlessly in the current which rendered me so helpless.

But it was the big fish, the sharks, that were the most impressive. Not two, three or even four of them, but at least 15 6ft-long grey reef sharks above, below and to my left and right. Like Tomahawk missiles, they cruised menacingly back and forth, often just feet away, looking for prey.

My Japanese dive buddy, hanging on to the reef beside me, tugged eagerly at my elbow and pointed behind us. Suspended in the water, a few inches away from where my fins lay, was a giant Napoleon wrasse; a huge but harmless fish almost the size of a man, its green and turquoise colours shining from the sunbeams penetrating the surface above. A huge eye swivelled in its socket, studying us inquisitively. I later learnt that it was accustomed to being fed, and was probably expecting a boiled egg.

After ten minutes of gazing in wonderment at the sharks, barracuda and wrasse, Dexter signalled that it was time to move on. The moment we let go of our rocks we were plucked up by the current and swept away.

The islands of Palau are a Mecca for divers from around the world. Blue Corner is one of 30 dives, many of which are world-famous.

But it's not necessary to don scuba gear to appreciate Palau's marine life. The islands contain 70 marine lakes. Each has a unique ecosystem but, perhaps, the most intriguing are the jellyfish lakes. There are five of these, one of which is regularly visited by tourists.

To get to the lakes, you have to drag yourself up and over a steep hill, picking your way over jagged limestone and through thick jungle for ten minutes. Wear tough shoes or your feet will regret it. Then you swim out through a tangle of mangrove roots, which encrust the shore, towards the middle of the lake to encounter what will be one of the most bizarre experiences of your life. Centuries of isolation from the outside world have caused every one of the thousands of jellyfish in this lake to lose the ability to sting. As a result, you can snorkel through a pulsating sea of completely harmless translucent blobs of jelly.

It's amazing. With each breast-stroke, your hands pass over their soft, gelatinous bodies. You can cup the baby ones, the size of a 10p coin, in your hands and watch them pulsate in temporary captivity.

The tranquil beauty of Palau makes it difficult to believe that these islands were once the site of some of the most bloody battles of the Second World War. The island most veterans visit is Peleliu. It has a population of 600 but, during the war, 20,000 Japanese and American soldiers died here in two months. Today, a visit to Peleliu is worth it just for the flight and the ariel views of what must be the most exquisite islands in the Pacific.

South of Palau's capital, Koror, all the way down Peleliu, over a twenty 20-mile stretch of ocean, are scattered the Rock Islands. Like precious green jewels they rise out of a shallow, calm sea made up of a patchwork of turquoise and azure. Erosion of the limestone at sea level makes many of the islands appear like giant green mushrooms.

Between dives, you'll be dropped off at one of these miniature paradises for lunch. My recommendation then is just to lie back under a coconut palm, listen to the chatter of the birds in the jungle behind you, and keep your eyes open for one of the giant fruit bats which float with a lazy grace among the islands.

The only thing that will tear you away from your reverie is the thought of an afternoon's diving at Blue Corner.

MARTIN POPPLEWELL

On Yap, traditional dress is still worn by the islanders

Getting there

☐ The author was the guest of Kuwait Airways (0171-412 0007) on his flight to Manila, Philippines; return flights from London cost from £530. STA Travel (0171-361 6262) paid for the flights with Continental Micronesia from Manila to Palau and Yap; return flights to Palau cost £290. The flight from Palau to Yap costs £160 return. STA can arrange tailor-made schedules and advise on hotels.

☐ On Palau, the author was the guest of the Sunrise Villa (00 680 488 4590, fax: 00 680 488 3155). The Palau Diving Centre (00 680 480 4590, fax: 00 680 488 3155) charges $85 (about £55) for a two-tank diving session, with lunch.

☐ On Yap, rates for the Manta Ray Bay Hotel (00 691 350 2300, fax 00 691 350 4567) start at $110 a night. A two-tank dive with Yap Divers costs $95.

☐ Rates at the Pathway's Hotel (00 691 350 3310, fax 00 691 350 2066) start at $85 a night.

YAP

IT IS only a 45-minute jet flight from Palau to Yap. But the moment you step off the plane you know you have arrived somewhere altogether different.

All the locals have bright-red teeth and spit blood-red saliva, coloured from their addictive chewing of betel nut. A number of the women greeting the plane will be topless; wearing only the traditional wraparound skirt, the *lava lava*. More often than not the friendly immigration officers will wear a garland of fresh flowers in their hair. A few years ago the island's first governor proposed legislation banning the wearing of ties.

If you want high-rise developments and snazzy beach resorts, Yap is not for you. If you want to see traditional Pacific island culture intact, with sleepy coastal villages and homes built out of bamboo and palm thatch, this is the place to visit.

In this forgotten corner of the world you can see traditional dances put on for the enjoyment of the locals, not for the tourists.

However, for many people it's not the sailing canoes, legendary navigators or even betel nut which draws them to Yap, but the opportunity to dive with giant manta rays.

It takes 50 minutes of skimming across Yap's dolphin-crowded waters to reach the Mi'l Channel where the main dive operators, Yap Divers, guarantees the presence of mantas.

Our chain-smoking Swiss guide, Freddie, gave us our briefing between puffs on his cigarette. Dive to 50ft, drive up the channel and then wait. The mantas, he assured would come to us.

Ten minutes into my dive I was sitting patiently, 50ft down among the rocks and coral, by the side of the channel, trigger fish darting in and out of the crevices around me. Rough weather had made the water cloudy, and scepticism about my chances of seeing mantas had begun to creep in. But I needn't have doubted.

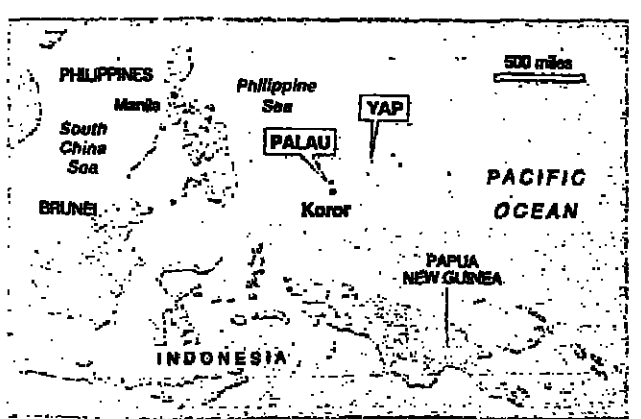
Through the hazy water I began to detect the outline of something massive. Slowly, almost like something out of a horror film, a gigantic bat-like manta soared into view. It was huge — more than 10ft across — and heading directly towards me. It wasn't alone.

I sat spellbound among the rocks as 15 enormous rays cruised one after the other, in a train, up the channel. It was like watching a silent underwater display of marine Stealth bombers. The manta at the head of the display was now inches away from me. Its gaping mouth must have been more than 2ft across, and I could see right inside — all its intricate white gill structures on display, small fish darting in and out to pick off parasites.

One by one the mantas passed effortlessly by, eventually being lost from sight. But there was one straggler. My buddy next to me, evidently thought all the creatures had passed. You should have seen the look of horror on his face when a 13ft ray crept up from behind, its sinister shadow moving just a foot above his head.

The mantas are a relatively new attraction on the island. For many years it was Yap's stone money that tourists came to see. This currency is the largest in the world and comes in the form of huge discs of limestone measuring up to 20ft in diameter. Each has a hole punched in the middle for carrying — no easy task; they can weigh up to five tonnes. But the value of the Yapese stone money is not determined just by its size. To understand the value of stone money you have to know where it comes from.

Mined 300 miles away in the islands of Palau, it was loaded on to barges and then towed by canoe to Yap. The journey was a dangerous one, and often lives would be lost at sea. This would affect the value of the money. If more people died bringing it to the island, that would add to its value. The stone money is still in use when buying land. But before you worry about how to change your pounds sterling into 12ft lumps of stone in preparation for your holiday, you'll be relieved to know that the US dollar is now the most commonly used currency.



Beyond the Great Wall

A remarkable travel opportunity to the People's Republic of China including a stopover in Central Asia

Following the inauguration of the weekly service from London Heathrow to Peking via Central Asia, we are able to offer just 20 seats per departure at this introductory low tariff. The arrangement commences with a flight from London Heathrow via Tashkent to Peking, followed by seven nights at the 4-star Xiyuan Hotel situated in the northwest of the city which is well located for making both independent and organised excursions to the Great Wall, Ming Tombs, Summer Palace, Forbidden City and Peking Zoo.

During your stay you may select one of the options of visiting China's ancient capital, Xian to see the Terracotta Warriors, or to visit Shanghai, Suzhou and the Grand Canal. Our return journey is via Tashkent where we transit for a two-night stay with an optional overnight trip to Samarkand, the glorious former capital of Tamburlaine the Great, before the return flight to London.

The Xiyuan Hotel, Peking.

The Xiyuan Hotel is an impressive international 4-star hotel, located in the northwest part of Peking city, only 30 kilometres from the airport and a 10-minute drive to the city centre. Facilities on the complex include a shopping centre, beauty salon, gym and swimming pool. The Xiyuan Hotel combines traditional Chinese garden architecture with modern deluxe construction. It has 1,300 rooms, all en-suite. There are a number of assorted restaurants and bars; including a revolving restaurant and a grand banquet hall.

Peking

The centre of Peking (Beijing) is dominated by the yellow roofs of the Forbidden City. Peking was divided into a number of walled sections or cities - the Forbidden City being the innermost and the most important as it housed the Emperor. Within its walls are six palaces; other imposing edifices include the Meridian Gate, the Hall of Supreme Harmony and the Hall of Central Harmony as well as the Golden Water Stream.

Today's Great Wall dates mainly from the Ming dynasty though it was constructed over a period of 2,500 years. The main visiting spot is the restored section at Badaling 45 miles northwest of Peking.

The Ming Tombs are a few miles from the Great Wall. Two are open to the public - those of Ding Ling, the 13th emperor and the only one to have been excavated; and of Chang Ling, the 3rd emperor.

The Temple of Heaven, on Peking's outskirts, was where the Emperor made his annual sacrifice. The main structures are the circular marble Altar, the Imperial Vault of Heaven and the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvest.

The Summer Palace lies on the shore of Lake Kunming, seven miles from Peking. Explore a number of the palaces and pavilions, and then perhaps take a boat across the lake from the Marble Boat, built for the Empress Dowager Ci Xi as a summerhouse.

10 nights from £550.00

Samarkand

'Everything I have heard about the beauty of this city is true' wrote Alexander the Great after his capture of Samarkand in 329 BC 'except that it is more beautiful than I could imagine'.

The city of Samarkand, one of the oldest in the world, lies on the banks of an irrigation canal just south of the River Zeravshan. Excavations on the outskirts of today's Samarkand have revealed the secrets of its 25 centuries of existence when it was the capital of the mighty state of Sogdiana. In 1369 Tamburlaine made it the capital of his huge empire; he called it 'the capital of capitals'. The buildings created by Tamberlaine and his successors still astonish with their fantastic richness and beauty.

Itinerary

Day 1 We depart London Heathrow in the evening for Peking and fly overnight.

Day 2 Arrive Peking and transfer to the Xiyuan Hotel. Stay of seven nights.

Days 3 - 8 At leisure in Peking with a wide choice of local sightseeing available in and around the capital such as the Great Wall, the Valley of the Ming Tombs, the Summer Palace, and the Forbidden City, plus optional excursions to Xian (to see the Terracotta Warriors) or to Shanghai and Suzhou.

Day 9 Evening depart Peking, arrive in Tashkent at midnight. Transfer to your hotel for a stay of two nights.

Day 10 Today there is an optional city tour of Tashkent or an overnight excursion to Samarkand.

Day 11 At leisure in Tashkent. Depart in the evening for London Heathrow.

Departure Dates & Prices

Tuesdays - per person in a twin room

1996	
Feb 20, 27	£595
Mar 5, 12, 19, 26	£595
Apr 2	£625
Apr 9, 16, 23, 30	£595
May 7, 14, 21, 28	£595
Jun 4, 11, 18, 25	£550
Jul 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	£575
Aug 6, 13, 20, 27	£610
Sep 3, 10, 17, 24	£635
Oct 1, 8, 15	£635
Oct 22, 29	£635
Single supplement	£135

Price includes: return flights, transfers and transportation, room and breakfast in Tashkent, room and breakfast in Peking, services of local guides. Not included: insurance, visa procurement fee, sightseeing (bookable locally), airport taxes, optional excursions, tips. All prices are subject to change.

Optional Excursions

per person in a twin.
These must be booked in advance.

2-night Excursion to Xian

Fly to Xian for a two-night stay including breakfast, city sightseeing and a visit to the Terracotta Army. Tariff £250 (Single supp £35).

3-night Excursion Shanghai & Suzhou

Fly to Shanghai for one night then travel by rail to Suzhou for two nights. Sail on the Grand Canal to Wuxi and continue by rail to Nanjing to connect with the return flight to Beijing. Including breakfast and full sightseeing in Shanghai and Suzhou. Tariff £295 (Single supp £35).

1-night Excursion to Samarkand

One night from Tashkent with guide. Tariff £75.

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هكذا من الأصل

Tired of television and turkey? Get out and about with our festive guide. By **Heather Alston**

End of year outings for all the family

LONDON

Peter Pan Cup Swimming Race: Traditional 100yd swimming race held on Christmas Day — watch from the edge.
Serpentine, Hyde Park, London W2. Christmas Day, 9am. Free.

The London Parade: Colossal cartoon character balloons (70ft high) and about 8,000 people including musicians, dancers, clowns and floats process through town. Noisy.
Parliament Square, Whitehall, Trafalgar Square, Lower Regent Street, Piccadilly, Berkeley Square (Details 0181-566 5586). New Year's Day, noon-3.30pm. Free.

New Year Time Travel: Travel through 200 years of public transport with characters from the past (Dec 31, Jan 1, 11am-3pm). Also a workshop to make animal posters based on the animal magic exhibition of advertisements for London Zoo (Dec 27, 28, 11.30am-4.30pm). Meet spiders and big live bugs from London (Dec 30, 2pm-4pm). Also Tram Tales, storytelling (Dec 27, 29, 11.30am-3.30pm) and face painting (Dec 31, 11.30am-4pm).
London Transport Museum, Covent Garden Piazza, WC2 (0171-379 6344). Dec 31-Jan 1, 11am-3pm. £4.25, children £2.50, under five free, family tickets £10.50. Events free. Closed tomorrow-Dec 26. Open daily 10am-6pm. Friday, 11am-6pm. ♿

Santa Clues Quiz: Find details in the paintings to make up a suitably festive scene, pick up the clues from the information desk (today-Jan 6).
National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, WC2 (0171-839 3321). Mon-Sat 10am-6pm. Wed till 8pm, Sun, 2pm-6pm. Closed tomorrow - Dec 26, Jan 1. Free. ♿

Christmas Restored: Join the wassailers and Sir Christemas for a rowdy party with disguises, dancing, carols and a mummers play. (Dec 27-31 at 12.30pm and 1.45pm, age five and over). Also meet Izaak Caltrop, a puppet and sedan chair carrier, who knows all about 17th-century street life (Dec 27-31, 12.15pm, 1.30pm, 2.45pm and 3.15pm, age six and over).
Museum of London, London Wall, EC2 (0171-600 0807). Tues-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 12-5.50pm. £3.50, children £1.75, family £8.50. Closed tomorrow-Dec 26, Jan 1. ♿

Barbican Children's Events
Aesop's Fabulous Fables: The Hare and the Tortoise, The Fox and the Crow, The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse: Dec 27, 1pm. Free.
Falling from the Sky — Clown Show: Dec 28, 1pm. Free.
Jack Stephens Magic Show: Dec 29, 1pm. Free.
Foyer, Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2 (0171-638 8891). ♿

Christmas at the V&A
Try your hand at Rangoli: floor painting with coloured powder and rice flour, as well as scroll-painting and jewellery making. Dec 29-31, Jan 5-7, at 11am, noon, 1pm and 2pm. There are also Jain hymns, dance and storytelling. Dec 27, 28, Jan 3, 4, from 11am-3.30pm.
Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, SW7 (0171-938 8638). Open Tues-Sun, 10am-5.50pm, Mon, 12-5.50pm. Closed Tomorrow to Dec 26. Free. ♿

Christmas Pantomime Make-up and Costume Workshops: Find out what it's like to be a pantomime dame. Make-up sessions at 12 and 3.30pm. Costume workshops, 12.30pm and 4pm.
Theatre Museum, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-836 7891). Dec 27-Jan 7. £3, children £1.50, family £7. Open Tues-Sun 11am-7pm. Closed tomorrow-Dec 26, Jan 1. ♿

Danger Mouse and Friends: Exhibition featuring Count Duckula, Noddy, The BFG, Oakie Doke and Fantomcat created by Cosgrove Hall. Enjoy the interactive exhibits or take a masterclass.
National Theatre, SE1 (0171-928 2252). Today-Feb 3, Open Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm. Admission free. Closed today to Dec 25. Reopens Boxing Day. ♿

Rupert's Christmas Visitors: Characters from Nutwood visit the museum, each with a different secret or skill to teach, from origami to magic. See the Rupert Bear Exhibition (closes Jan 21).
Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, Cambridge Heath Road, E2 (0181-980 2415). Open Mon-Thurs and Sat, 10am-5.50pm (closed Friday), Sun 2.30-5.50pm. Workshops today, Dec 27, 28, 30 and Jan 2 and 6, at 11am, 1pm and 3pm. Free. Closed tomorrow-Dec 26, Jan 1. ♿

DAVID LYTTLETON

CUMBRIA

Jacobite Tours of Carlisle Castle: Meet Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Duke of Cumberland, and enjoy festive refreshments and Christmas crackers.
Tour of Castle (01228 591922). One hour. Dec 27-29, 12.30pm. £3.50, children £2.50; Dec 30, 31, 12.30pm, £3.20, children £1.70. Normal admission £2.20, children £1.10. Tour of City and Castle starting from the Visitor Centre, The Old Town Hall (01228 512444). Two hours, Dec 27-29, 11am and 1pm. £4, children £3.

Mince Pie Specials: Travel by steam and enjoy seasonal fare.
South Tynedale Railway, Alston (01434 381696). Dec 26, 30 and 31, 12-3pm, £2, child £1.

DERBYSHIRE

Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine Christmas Party: Join the celebrations and take a ride.
Midland Railway Centre, Butterley Station, Ripley (01773 747674). Tickets adults £6.95, two children free with each adult. Dec 28-Jan 1, 11.15am-3.05pm. ♿

DEVON

Family entertainment: Storytelling, face painting and more hands-on activities in the Abbey.
Buckland Abbey, Yelverton, Plymouth. (01822 853607). Dec 31, 12.30pm-4.30pm. £2, child £1. Open Sat, Sun only, 2pm-5pm. Closed today, tomorrow. ♿

New-Year's Babies Day: See the tiny and not so tiny creatures that have been born this winter. Cuddle a piglet or feed the calves.
Crealy Park, Clyst St Mary, Exeter (01395 233200). Open daily 10.30am-5pm. Closed tomorrow-Dec 26. £3.45, children £2.75. ♿

GREATER MANCHESTER

Heavenly Scent: Explore the magic and mystery of perfume. Follow the Smelly trail by sniffing out the hidden aromas with seasonal smells. (Dec 27-29).
Museum of Science and Industry, Liverpool Road, Castlefield, Manchester (0161-832 2244). £4, child £2, under five free. Open daily 10am-5pm (except tomorrow to Dec 26). ♿

KENT

New Year's Day Treasure Trail: A traditional fun-for-all quiz, with prizes.
Leeds Castle, Leeds (01622 765400). Open 10am-3pm, last start for the quiz at 2pm. £7.50, accompanied children up to 15 free on New Year's Day, normally £5.50. Closed Dec 25. ♿

LEICESTERSHIRE

Christmas Gala: Be pulled by the *Duchess of Hamilton* on a rare outing from the National Railways Museum.
Great Central Railway, Great Central Road, Loughborough (01509 230726). Dec 26-Jan 1, 9am-5.30pm, £9.75, children £6.45 for round trip. ♿

MERSEYSIDE

Codman's Traditional Punch and Judy Theatre: Cheer the heroes and boo the villains.
The Museum of Liverpool Life, Mann Island, Liverpool (0151-478 4080). Performances Dec 28-30 at 1pm, 2pm and 3pm. Open daily 10.30am-5.30pm. Admission ticket valid for a year for Museum of Liverpool Life, Merseyside Maritime Museum (including HM Customs and Excise National Museum) £3, child £1.50, family £8. ♿

NORFOLK

Puppet Making Workshops: Make your own puppet. Also performances of *Thumbelina*, the Hans Christian Andersen tale, set among gardening tools; and *Aladdin* based on traditional Chinese designs with ragtime music.
Norwich Puppet Theatre, St James, Whitefriars, Norwich (01603 629921). Workshops, age five and over, today, 10.30am, next Sat, 2pm, £4.50. cf700Thumbelina, Tues-Sun until Jan 7, ring for performance times, age three-six years, £3.75. Aladdin. *Dec 26-30, 3.15pm, and Dec 27, 7.15pm, age five and over. £5.75, children £4.75.* ♿

NORTHUMBERLAND

Woodland in winter and wildlife safari: wander through the woodland and spot the wildlife on these short walks for families.
Visitor Centre, Cragside, Rothbury, Morpeth (01669 620266). Dec 27, 28, 2pm. Free.

OXFORDSHIRE

A Tudor Christmas Experience: A manor house is decorated as it would have been in Tudor times.
Sulgrave Manor, Sulgrave, Banbury (01295 760205). Until December 31. £3.50, child £1.75. Open Dec 27-31, 10.30am-1pm and 2-4.30pm.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Jungle Book: Snap Theatre Company's production is based on the stories by Rudyard Kipling.
Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent (01283 567720). December 27-30, 7.30pm, £5.50, child £4.50. December 28, 30, 2pm, £4.50, child £3.50. ♿

SURREY

Tudor Christmas Activities: Feasting and merrymaking with cooks preparing dishes of the day, plus fire eaters, jugglers and jesters.
Hampton Court Palace, Hampton Court, East Molesey (0181-781 9500). Festivities Dec 27-Jan 1. Open Mon, 10.15am-4.30pm, Tues-Sun 9.30am-4.30pm. £7.50, children £4.90, family £19.30. Closed tomorrow-Dec 26. ♿

YORKSHIRE

Big Fibs and Tall Stories: Discover the truth behind the myths (today, Dec 27-Jan 7, throughout the day).
Eureka! The Museum for Children, Discovery Road, Halifax (01422 330069). Open daily 10am-5pm. £4.50, children £3.50, family £14.50, under three free. Closed tomorrow-Dec 26.

Pilgrimage Walk: Meet at Ripon Cathedral to walk through the fields for carols in the ruins of Fountains Abbey (at 1pm).
Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, Ripon, Yorkshire (01765 609999). December 26, 11am.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ulster-American Folk Park: Demonstrations of 18th and 19th-century life in Ireland, watch costume characters make candles, soap, weave and cook over an open hearth.
Ulster-American Folk Park, Castletown, Omagh, Co Tyrone (01662 243292). Open Mon-Fri, 10.30am-5pm. Closed Dec 25-27. £3.50, child £1.70. ♿

SCOTLAND

Torchlight procession to Santa Claus land: Pipes, drums, Santa, his reindeer and Disney characters process through the main street to Santa Claus land for fireworks.
Aviemore, Inverness-shire (01479 810624). Tomorrow, 5.45pm. Free.

Another Torchlight Procession: Santa Claus in his sleigh pulled by reindeer passes through the town.
Grantown on Spey, Morayshire (01479 872126). Today, 7pm. Free.

The Happy Gang: A musical voyage around Scotland.
Bedlam Theatre, Forrest Road, Edinburgh (0131-225 9893). Dec 29-Jan 1, 2pm and 4pm. £3.50.

Mince Pie Specials Strathspey Steam Railway:
Boat of Garden, Inverness-shire. (01479 810725). Tomorrow and Dec 26, 31, Jan 1, 2.

WALES

Toy with the Idea: Exhibition of toys, models and automata, made by Rodney Peppé, creator of Huxley Pig.
Chepstow Museum, Gwy House, Bridge Street, Chepstow, Gwent (01291 625981). Open Mon-Sat, 11am-1pm and 2-5pm, Sun, 2-5pm. Closed tomorrow-Dec 26, Jan 1. Ends Jan 21. £1, children free.

Treasure Trail: Follow the clues to find the treasure.
Minera Lead Mines and Country Park, Wern Road, Minera, Wrexham (01978 751320). Jan 2, 10am-4pm.

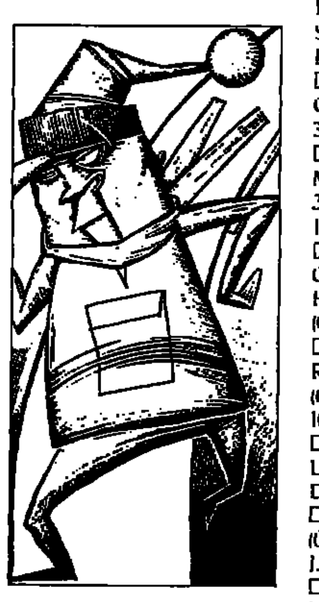
Christmas Holiday Activities: Find out how to put a ship in a bottle, how to fire a cannon; build a bridge and more.
Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum, Bute Street, Cardiff (01222 481919). £1.50, children 75p, family £3.75. Tues-Sun 10am-5pm: Activities Dec 27-Jan 2. Closed Dec 25, 26, Jan 1. ♿

Wonderful winter walks

A SELECTION of easy walks (under five miles) that will allow you to walk off the Christmas excesses. Take warm, waterproof clothing and stout footwear.

National Trust Week of Christmas Walks *(Dec 26-Jan 1), telephone the listed numbers for details:*

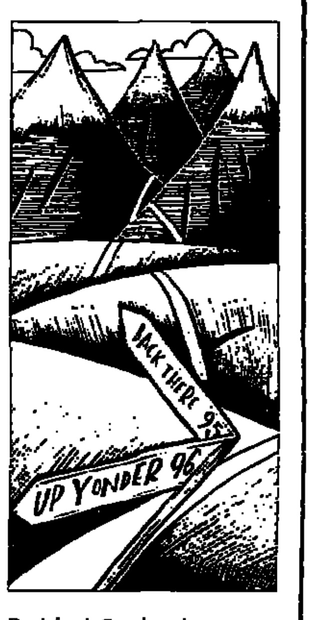
- ☐ Claverton Down, Bath, Avon (01225 833977). Dec 28, 10.30am.
- ☐ Sand Point, Avon (01278 789984). Jan 1, 10.30am.
- ☐ Dunham Massey, Cheshire (0161-941 1025). Dec 30, 1.30pm.
- ☐ West Penwith, near St Just, Cornwall (01736 796993). Dec 27, 1pm.
- ☐ Bosloe, near Mawnan Smith, Cornwall (01326 250 722). Dec 29, 2pm.
- ☐ Porthcurno, Treen Cliff, Cornwall (01736 793 487). Dec 29, 11am.
- ☐ Ayrmer Cove, near Ringmore, Devon (01548 580 837). Dec 27, 11am.
- ☐ Saltram, near Plymouth, Devon (01752 348671). Dec 28, 10am.
- ☐ Branscombe, Devon (01404 851049). Dec 27, 11am.
- ☐ Salcombe, Devon (01395 276626). Dec 29, 2pm (strenuous).
- ☐ Killerton House, Broadclyst, Exeter, Devon (01392 881345). Dec 30, 2pm.
- ☐ Kingston Lacy, Dorset (01202 882493). Dec 28, noon.
- ☐ Purbeck Estate, Dorset (01929 450259). Dec 29, 10.30am.
- ☐ Corfe Castle, Dorset (01929 481294). Dec 31, 10.30am.
- ☐ Ringstead Bay, Dorset (01985 843600). Jan 2, 10.30am.
- ☐ The Vyne, Sherborne St John, near Basingstoke, Hampshire (01256 881337). Dec 26, 11am.
- ☐ Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst, Kent (01892 891001). Dec 27, 11am.
- ☐ Cragside, near Rothbury, Northumberland (01669 620 266). Dec 27 and 28, 2pm.
- ☐ Holmwood Common, near Dorking, Surrey (01306 888417). Dec 27, 2pm.
- ☐ Headley Heath, near Headley, Surrey (01372 375552). Dec 29, 2pm.
- ☐ Witley Common, near Godalming, Surrey (01428 713532). Dec 31, 10.30am.
- ☐ Harting Down, South Harting, near Petersfield, Sussex (01730 816638). Dec 26, 2pm.
- ☐ Cherhill Down, near Calne, Wiltshire (01672 539250). Dec 27, 10.30am.
- ☐ Avebury Estate, near Marlborough, Wiltshire (01672 539250). Dec 29, 10.30am.
- ☐ Erddig, near Wrexham, Clwyd, Wales (01978 355314). Dec 27, 10am.



For details of other walks call 0171-222 9251.

The Ramblers' Festival of Winter Walks: *Over 200 walks have been organised throughout England, Scotland and Wales to refresh and revitalise the body after the festivities. These are just a selection of those under five miles.*

- ☐ Alameda, Woburn Street, Ampthill Town, Bedfordshire (01234 381508). Dec 28, 10.30am.
- ☐ Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire (01628 26757). Dec 26, 10.15am.
- ☐ Chorley Road, West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire (01296 27717). Jan 1, 10.30am and 2.30pm.
- ☐ St Andrew's Church, Rochford, Southend on Sea, Essex (01702 582230) Dec 26, 10.30am.
- ☐ Great Wigborough, Colchester, Essex (01206 382890). Dec 27, 2pm.
- ☐ Droxford Square, Meon, Hampshire (01329 284556). Dec 28, 10am and 1.30pm.
- ☐ Twyford Bank, Greenhill, Evesham, Hereford and Worcester (01386 446538). Dec 28, 10am.
- ☐ Therfield Heath, Royston, Hertfordshire (01763 244509). Dec 27, 10am and 1.30pm.
- ☐ Fairy Glen, Parbold, Lancashire (01772 8120340). Dec 25, 1pm.
- ☐ Putney Bridge, London (0181-563 1605). Today, 1.30pm.
- ☐ Holkham Beach, Holkham, Norfolk (01328 862321). Dec 27, 11am.
- ☐ *Bishopsgate*, Windsor Park, Surrey (01932 782669). Jan 1, 10am.
- ☐ Winnie the Pooh Walk, Gills Lap, Ashdown Forest, near Crowborough, East Sussex (01892 654850). Dec 31, 10am.
- ☐ Letham Glen, Glenrothes, Caledonian, (01592 758888). Dec 27, 1.30pm.
- ☐ Llandovery, Dyfed, (01550 721261) Dec 26, 11am.
- ☐ Turkey Trot in Carmarthen, Dyfed, (01267 234493. Dec 30, 1pm.
- ☐ Bridge Inn Pub, Caergwrle, Clwyd, (0585 163719). Jan 1, 12.30pm.



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FRENCH GUIANA: A memorable combination of rocket launches, sexy celebrations and tongue-tingling cuisine

Prime site to watch the space invaders

If your fantasy is to be mothered by a large woman who looks as though she has been attacked by several rolls of clashing fabric, then you should head for French Guiana. The way of the *toulalou*, clad in all manner of ruses to conceal her identity, is to pluck a hapless man off the sidelines and force him to perform lewd manoeuvres on the dance floor to pulsating music. This carnival-style ritual is enjoyed every spring by women of all ages and sizes, and perhaps less so by the normally attired men who attend to their libidinous intentions.

Feeble males who like to be neither mothered nor smothered are advised to avoid the *toulalou* dances, because a man must not refuse a dance. Undisguised women are forbidden from participating. Another rule is that men must *never* do the asking.

The exotic *toulalou* season is a little-known side of French Guiana. The Amazonian rainforest and the former penal colony Devil's Island (where *Papillon* was set) are more familiar. Devil's Island is the most notorious of the Iles de Salut, a trio of islands where France imprisoned its worst criminals. You can visit them by catching one of many boats that criss-cross between the islands and the mainland. This remote South American country, still a *département* of France, is *the* place to bag a celebrity-free tropical holiday. The best time to visit is between January and April, when there is a refreshing balance between heat and rain.

If food is a passion, French Guiana would satisfy the most demanding lover. French haute cuisine has been imported by an influx of white Europeans. Alternatively, you may enjoy traditional Creole cooking, such as wild boar curry. This hair-raising cuisine will test your resilience to cayenne pepper, the exported spice after which the capital is named. Wash it down with the national elixir — Planter's punch — guaranteed to steel anyone against the charms of the *toulalous*.

French Guiana sounds like a beachbum's heaven. But what are you going to say to a smug colleague who has spent his or her holiday trekking across deserts and canoeing down waterfalls? Well, in addition to canoeing down the Maroni river to see Amerindian villages, you can watch a rocket launch. French Guiana is the site from which European launches are carried out (it takes less fuel to launch rockets near the equator, because the pull of gravity is weaker). A consortium of private firms is cashing in on the space theme by offering trips to watch the Ariane rocket thunder to the heavens while sipping a cocktail.

The travel organisation responsible, Espace Amazonie, has been given access to one of four close-range sites near the Ariane launch pad. "Any people who do have an image of French Guiana think it is full of jails, snakes and spiders but it is a very pleasant place," says Bernard Guillaumant, the man behind Espace Amazonie. "Last year we had honeymooners and businessmen, and even a group of 80-year-olds."

Genuine tourists — those who do not have relatives or space business to attend to — number up to only 10,000 each year compared with more than 400,000 to nearby Guadeloupe.

The space centre is based in Kourou, a town on the country's thin inhabited coastal strip. Its previously empty landscape has allowed the space centre to sprawl unhindered across an area the size of Paris. This means that most people you meet will have something to do with rockets, apart from the great number of young Legionnaires who frequent the bars and hog the pool tables. Troops of visiting dignitaries and journalists have boosted the number and quality of hotels and restaurants in Kourou, although the three-star hotel where I stayed — Hotel des Roches — had appalling turquoise decor.

If you decide to visit French Guiana, health — especially malaria — should be your greatest concern. It is one of the few countries where the yellow fever vaccination is still required for entry. However, sensible travellers with a good supply of insect repellent and malaria tablets will have nothing to fear from the B-movie flying monsters which colonise the country after dark.

ANJANA AHUJA

L. LAMMERHUBER

The vibrantly painted houses are typical of the Iles de Salut, a trio of islands off the mainland

French Guiana: how to get there

☐ The author travelled to French Guiana as a guest of the European Space Agency.

☐ Air France (0181-742 6600) has daily weekday flights from London to the capital Cayenne via Paris. Prices start at £936 (plus airport taxes) for a fixed-date ticket. More flexible tickets cost from around £1,105 to £1,928.

☐ Espace Amazonie can tailor packages for groups ranging from two people up to 150. Prices start at 9,720 FF (about £1,320) for return flight from London, two nights B&B and a launch.

☐ For further information contact Air France in Paris on 00 33 1 4864 2360; fax 00 33 1 4864 3874.

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MADAGASCAR: **Joe Roberts** experiences a clash of cultures as he goes in search of the elusive aye-aye

When I heard the lemur sing

I saw an aye-aye. It was in the chilly Périnet reserve, on a tree-trunk about twenty yards from the Hôtel Buffet de là Gare at Andasibe. I had walked there from my hotel, Feon' Ny Ala (Malagasy for "the sound of the forest") with Michel from SETAM (*Société pour l'exploitation du tourisme à Madagascar*) and Claude, our Bezanozano jungle guide. Until then, the night-walk had been less than inspiring: we had seen one miniature tree-frog and an even smaller chameleon. Mostly we had seen the torch-beams of tourists, Germans and white South Africans, traipsing along the road through the rainforest. Claude let out a shriek — "Aye-aye! Aye-aye!" — which didn't seem to alarm the animal in question. Soon, a dozen torches were trained on the tree-trunk and inquisitive diners began to emerge from the Hôtel Buffet.

I watched the aye-aye (*Daubentonia madagascariensis*) through binoculars. It was a most peculiar thing, grey-black, bushy-tailed, basically squirrel-shaped, the size of a Yorkshire terrier. A pallid face with Mickey Mouse ears, round kohl-rimmed eyes (crimson in the light) with dilated pupils and an angry mouth with outsize teeth — "a terrible face", whispered Claude. The black hands were skeletal; the third finger, much longer than the others, is used like a winkle-pin to extract grubs from knot-holes.

The aye-aye stayed for about ten minutes then slipped off into the dark woods. "Bye-bye, aye-aye," said Michel.

Other jungle guides were slapping Claude on the back. "It is the first one most have seen," he explained. "The third I have seen in my life."

Unlike most lemurs, the aye-aye is generally feared in Madagascar. Some tribes regard it as a harbinger of death and kill it on sight. Some will deposit the corpse in an enemy's village as a bad luck charm. In extreme cases, I am told, an aye-aye entering a village means burning down the houses and moving elsewhere.

ALAN GODWIN

I asked Claude if he was frightened by what he had seen. "No, I am very happy," he said.

Michel and I returned to Feon' Ny Ala where we dined on egg-fried rice, followed by bananas flamed with local rum. "We had a good chance," he kept saying in his enigmatic "flowing" English.

The next morning I was woken by the singing of indri lemurs: long, plaintive sobs ending in question marks. Some find the sound moving and beautiful; it induced in me a profound melancholy. My mood was not alleviated by Michel knocking on the door of my hut, announcing a wonderful surprise. This turned out to be not another rare animal, but a cordless microphone that enabled him to use a ghetto-blaster as a public address system. Wonderful, indeed.

"Good appetite, Mr Roberts!" echoed through the trees as I sat down to breakfast. There was much flapping of wings. "Will you experiment?" he asked, offering me the microphone. I declined politely.

Later that morning Claude took us into the forest where we saw a troop of indris, black and white, as large as four-year-old children, looking like cherished teddy-bears with quizzical faces. I couldn't believe such attractive creatures had produced the eerie wails I'd heard.

We left Périnet and drove through the central highlands towards Antananarivo. At the roadside were women in straw boaters selling little bundles of green reeds containing, Michel assured me, lobsters. Lobsters from mountain streams. I asked the driver to stop the car, and went to inspect the bundles. Nestled in each one was a shiny brown crustacean like a Dublin Bay prawn.

Michel played tapes of Malagasy music, identifying and describing the instruments. A *valiha* is a tubular zither that sounds like a harp. There is also a box-shaped zither called a *marovany* and a kind of ukulele called a *kabosy*. The French introduced the accordion. Malagasy music bears some resemblance to Polynesian music: in fact the two cultures are linguistically related.

Sometimes the melodies sounded vaguely familiar, as if they derived from European or American originals: once a voice sang — in what I gradually recognised to be highly distorted English — "Breaking rocks in the hot sun, I fought the law and the law won . . ."

MARTIN NICOLL / STILL

Left: the Spiny Forest. Above: the teddy-bear face of the indri lemur seems at odds with its sad call

Antananarivo, the capital, is built on 12 sacred hills; rice paddies edge right up to their feet, creating a medieval impression like a city in an illuminated manuscript. Narrow red houses with pointed gables, crumbling brickwork and rickety balconies shoulder one another up the hillsides. Heavy lorries compete with ox-carts; rickshaws (*pousse-pousses*) scurry through the bustle. Everything is filtered through a haze of exhaust fumes and fine crimson dust and sometimes a blue confetti of jacaranda petals flutters down. Constant breezes and the high altitude give Antananarivo a comfortable climate although, in the colonial past, the city was considered unsuitable for those inclined to depression. The Malagasy word for Friday is *Zoma* which is also the name of the great market that takes place on that day on Avenue de L'Indépendence. Thousands of stalls are set out under white parasols — looking from afar like a field of mushrooms — and you will be offered everything from live chickens and medicinal herbs to obsolete Citroën parts and back-numbers of *Health & Efficiency*.

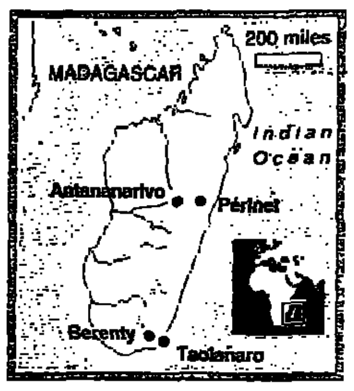
On every street there are cafés called *hotelys*. Michel recommended a regional speciality, *ravitoto*, which he described as "pig bonded with leaves" (it was fried pork with shredded manioc greens).

I met an American couple on the plane from Antananarivo to Taolañaro who talked about an extinct ground-dwelling lemur the size of a gorilla. We were heading for Berenty, a private reserve in the arid south-east of the country.

On our way there, we drove through an area of Spiny Forest, mile upon mile of the strangest-looking trees — some like cacti, some like tangled barbed-wire, some like enormous leather bottles, all endemic to Madagascar — and we passed the settlements of the Antandroy ("people of the thorns") who make a meagre living from charcoal. Then the Spiny Forest gives way to a vast sisal plantation and beyond that is Berenty: one of the best places in the world to observe lemurs.

Ringtails abound, pouring down from the tamarind trees to welcome you, almost posing for the camera. Shyer in temperament but more spectacular are the sifakas (*Propithecus verreauxi coquereli*) with their white coats and black faces, springing sideways along the ground with outstretched arms.

"Those guys are so fine," said the American woman. Her husband smiled. "If I wasn't a biology professor, I guess I'd like to be a sifaka."



Getting there

☐ The author was a guest of Reef & Rainforest Tours which specialises in tailor-made tour itineraries to Madagascar, usually lasting 17-31 days.

☐ A typical 17-day tour for two people — including transfers and transportation, accommodation, most meals, excursions, private guide and domestic flights — would start at £1,749 per person, excluding flights to Madagascar.

☐ Reef & Rainforest also runs an annual group tour led by Hilary Bradt, the author of the indispensable *Guide to Madagascar* (Bradt Publications). A 17-day tour next November will be based on Gerald Durrell's book *The Aye Aye and I* (£1,694 per person sharing double rooms).

☐ Reef & Rainforest Tours Ltd, 3 Moorashes, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5TN (01803 866965).

☐ Return economy flights on Air Madagascar (01293 523958) via Paris cost £791-£990 depending on the season.

☐ The best season to visit is from May to October.

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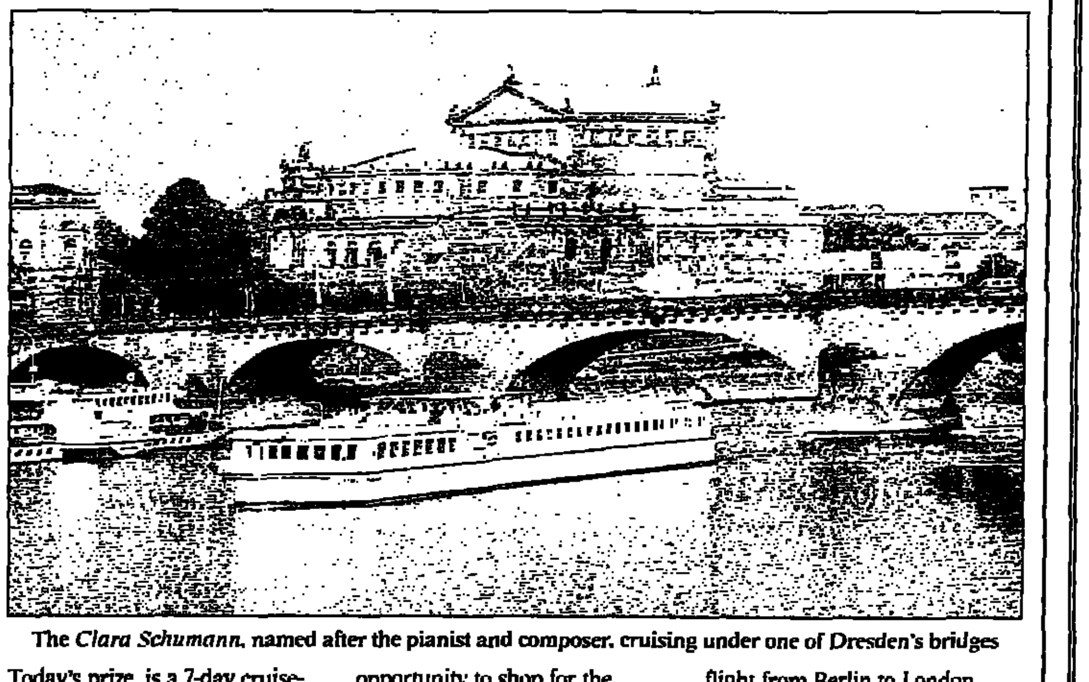

The *Clara Schumann*, named after the pianist and composer, cruising under one of Dresden's bridges

Today's prize, is a 7-day cruise-holiday for two on board KD's *MS Clara Schumann* worth £2,750. The prize winner and guest will be flown to Prague to stay at the Atrium Hotel overnight before cruising on the Elbe, the former border between West and East Germany. This destination has been virtually inaccessible for the 45 years the country was divided.

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THE QUESTIONS

1. Which two cities on the cruise are famous for their china?

2. Where did Martin Luther nail his theses to a church door?

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IN THE SUNDAY TIMES TOMORROW: WIN A CRUISE ON THE DANUBE

CORNWALL: Along the coast, villages vie with each other to send out the most glowing Christmas message

Harbours reflect seasonal brightness

Summer visitors to picturesque Cornish fishing harbours would not give a passing thought to Christmas light displays. But hardly has the last caravan disappeared over the Tamar Bridge than the fishing communities set about the task of flooding their villages with a rainbow of seasonal colour.

Determined to outshine their coastal neighbours, they string thousands of bulbs along harbour walls and out across the cliff faces. Miles of cable connect set pieces and twinkling working models. Fishing boats smothered with lights float in the harbours and, at places such as Mousehole, model sea serpents and whales more than 60ft long float in the waters — picked out in yet more lights.

Ashore, house windows and shopfronts are lit up. And the light and the colour rises up the steep backdrop of the fishing villages in a kaleidoscope that would astonish the summer visitor more used to thinking of Cornwall's pretty harbours in terms of sand, rocks and sunshine.

The custom of Christmas lights has its roots in the misty Cornish tradition of a candle in the window to guide the seamen safely home. In Victorian times, most fishermen's cottages sported a Christmas candle through the festive season, though the vogue for the modern, extravagant displays dates mostly from the 1960s.

Dudley Penrose, chairman of the Christmas lights committee at Mousehole, spells out the size of the problems involved. "Every year we put up five to six thousand bulbs, in addition to the set pieces that include a Christmas pudding, Father Christmas and a reindeer. Three decorated sailing boats float out in the harbour with the serpent and whale.

"All the work is done on a voluntary basis, with local people helping out on Saturday afternoons and, perhaps, a couple of hours on Sunday. We make everything ourselves, but no one was very pleased a couple of years ago when new European Union safety regulations cost us £2,500. We had to buy new timeswitches and electrical boxes and everything had to be brought up to EU standards.

"The custom had a small beginning, and we have built up the lighting year after year. A local woman began it all in 1963 when she hung a strip of lights in the street outside her home, at her own expense, and the idea quickly caught on."

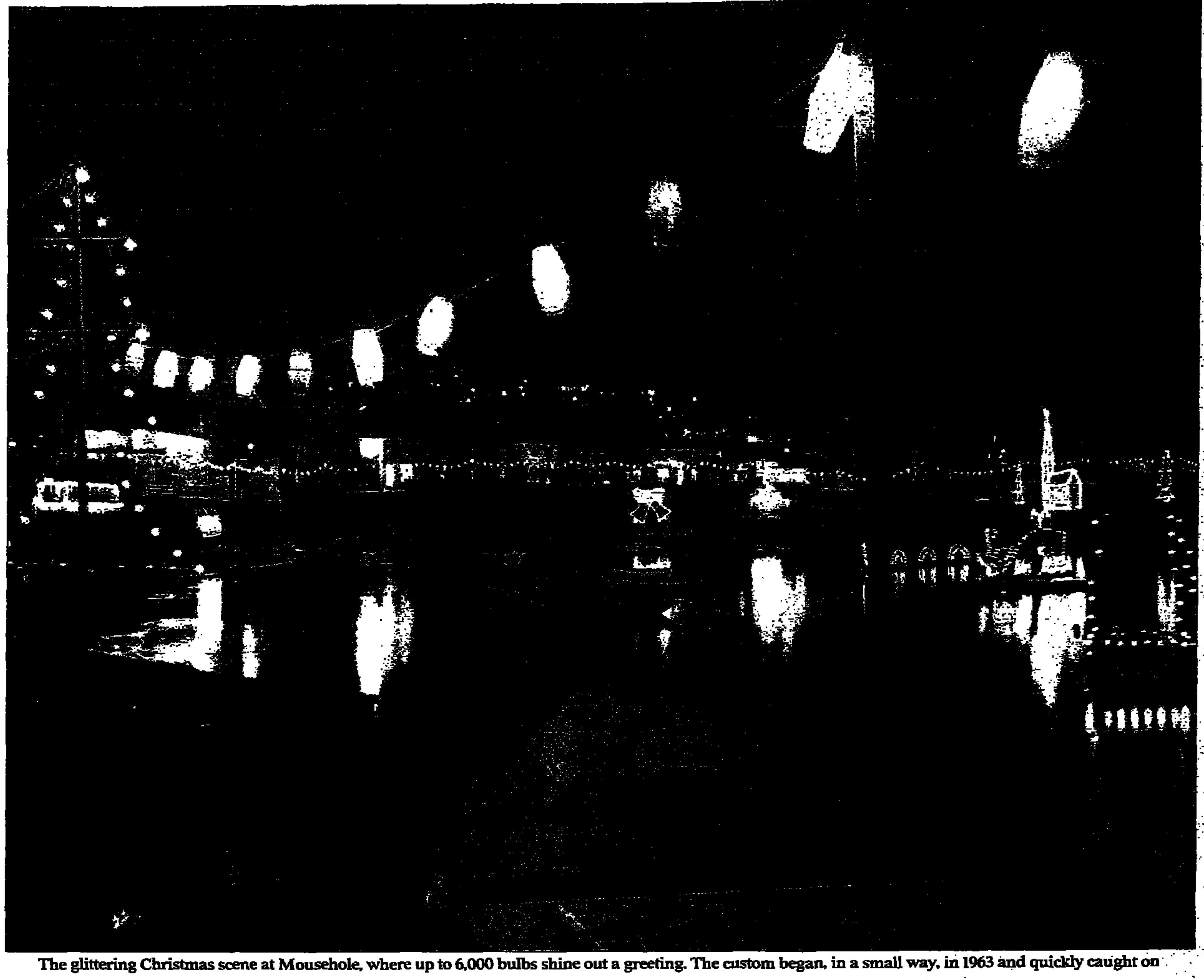
> 'The light of candles guided the fishermen to safety'

Now, lights go on every year at Cadgwith, Penzance, Coverack, Newlyn, Porthleven, Mousehole and other harbours and villages, as well as the inland towns.

The port of Newlyn is too busy bringing in the nation's fish suppers to permit illuminated boats to float in the harbour. But ashore the display of Christmas lights covers 40 acres.

Each fishing village runs its own lights committee, and most villages hold events during the year to raise cash for the display. Many visitors to a summer fête or barbecue have no idea that the proceeds are going towards a December display.

At Cadgwith one hot July evening this year, hundreds of visitors crammed the little fishing harbour to enjoy a shark barbecue. The steaks were delicious and the proceeds went to provide ever better Christmas lights.


COLLECTIONS

The glittering Christmas scene at Mousehole, where up to 6,000 bulbs shine out a greeting. The custom began, in a small way, in 1963 and quickly caught on

The residents of Cadgwith are fighting hard to keep up. They have been lighting their small coves and picture-book beach, strewn with small boats, for only three years. But already they are the envy of others. For one thing, a steel cable from one cliff to another across the bay suspends a sailing boat that glows with fluorescent paint and reflects dramatically on the water.

The Hewer's hut, an old lookout point on the shore where fishermen once watched for the annual invasion of pilchard shoals, is also illuminated. In the past, when the watchers in the hut saw the waters turn red they knew the pilchards had arrived and called out the waiting boats. Alas, such shoals no longer pass by, but the hut remains and shines its Christmas message.

A large cross is also lit, out in the bay, for Peter Williams and Tony Culmer, who were lost in a freak accident while fishing at sea in March 1994. Now the light of Christmas shines in their memory.

But if you imagine that stringing all those hundreds of yards of lights around the bay must now be a high-tech affair, that's not the way of it in Cornwall. John Chesters, proprietor of the Cadgwith Cove Inn and vice-chairman of the lights committee, confesses: "We just tie a long, wobbly ladder to the back of the tractor, clamber up, and sway about at the top while we try to secure them."

DENIS ATHERTON

- *Penzance Tourist Information Centre: 01736 62207.*

CHRISTMAS JUMBO CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Face damage following storm, as a result of this command from Lear? (4,5,3,5,4,6)
15 A hundred and two sovereigns in bank (7)
16 Qualification for special land grant (11)
17 Chap with something that needs darning given access to sewer (7)
18 Opposition's collection of new taxes is following a precedent (10)
19 Catterick soldier's pet? (9,7)
21 Combine as a section, mostly as arranged (9)
23 Found fault with a back number, having bought it outside (9)
25 He's legally empowered to kill game (7)
26 After interruption, continue summary (6)
27 Spoke loudly, and was heard in the wings (7,3)
29 Man who's dishevelled as result of soccer war involvement (9)
33 Organ transplant sanctioned by Old Testament? (2,3,3,2,3)
36 Tyre, say, that's fitted on car (7)
37 Two letters read out in lodge (5)
38 Happening to fish in twilight (8)
39 Create king for Ireland, say (8)
40 I must be in sun — fortunately, there's a flight there (9)
42 One looking at magazine (9)
43 It's hard to disagree about an impassioned speech (8)
44 They don't believe article, as it's perniciously put about (8)
47 What inaccurate archer, lacking cunning, gets? (5)
48 Curiously bad sign for corporation (7)
49 Senior members of family are Trinity men (5,8)
50 Flattered by appearance on the box (9)
52 He forecasts hot years so inaccurately (10)
54 Opening to do well? Do well at first (6)
57 Curious works in collection of books held by girl (7)
60 Remove restrictions on outside firm's old rent arrangement (9)
62 It's unwise to be endlessly rude, in charge (9)
63 Give tolerance and support to deception, and take minor role (4,6,6)
65 Urchin gives way to horse (6,4)
68 Did a government job, and came down to speak (7)
69 Onset of canker, cutting into profit on fruit, is causing ructions (7,4)
70 Shaw's work, ultimately different from Voltaire's (7)
71 Female's closest associate seen in suit, going by air (8,3,1,5,4,6)

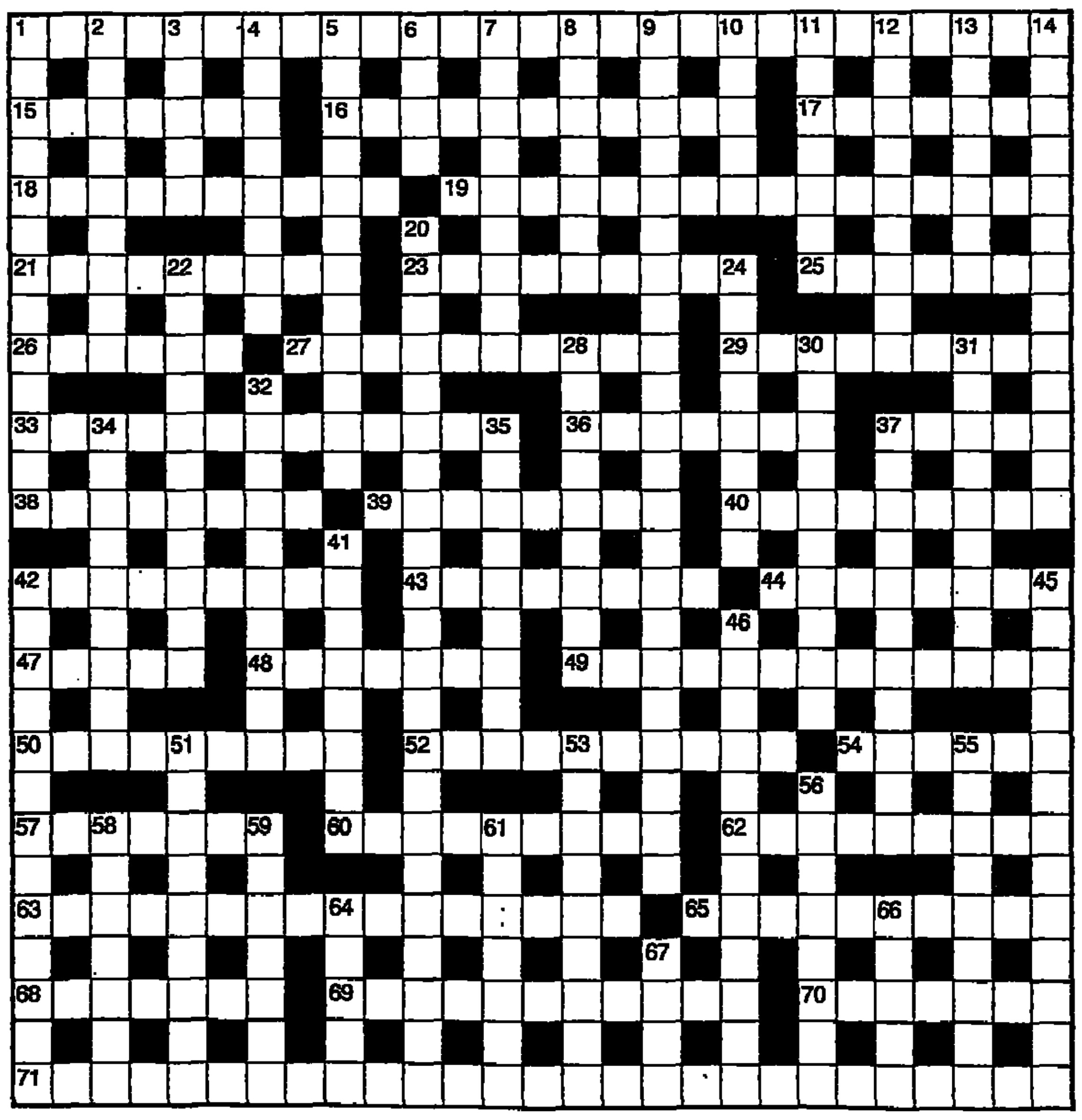
DOWN

1 Degree of vocal support given to a prize-winner (13)
2 Exhausts with public demands (9)
3 Beat bottom (5)
4 Old raider's manner so awful (8)
5 Possibly belligerent female views romance as absurd (12)
6 Hooter in front of car (4)
7 About to get an order to move old gun (9)
8 Statesman, I regret, has only half a state (7)
9 Adventurous team who never got a square meal? (7,2,3,5,5)
10 He has daughter taken off tranquilliser (5)
11 Return for second wedding? (7)
12 Let deer gallop around naturally at first (9)
13 It's a vanity case (7)
14 Car's turning circle (8,5).
20 Novel sequence in *Minute Waltz*? (1,5,2,3,5,2,4)
22 Sports journalist's note upset work schedule (11)
24 Norfolk townsmen reportedly in concealment (8)
28 Award replaced in case, showing deference (9)
30 Where ploughmen may be seen as delightful types? (10)
31 He forcibly puts down material, knocking top off furniture (9)
32 Group of wagons needing a proper pull (5,5)
34 Basic fault with an England opener? Tell me (9)
35 Nobody uses this language, naturally (9)
37 Make mistake in set-up over test on the ground (11)
41 Came up with reminder about Mussolini (8)
42 Irascible stepmother turned crimson (5-8)
45 Streetwalker's advertisement carried by this? (8,5)
46 Divorcée is taken in by false version of earlier life (3-9)
51 Sliding scale? (9)
53 Watchman in small house and I agree there's nothing left inside (9)
55 Decide to discourage digging for valuables (9)
56 Blow as drug is reduced (5-3)
58 Old air can possibly get arranged for this (7)
59 Bill surrendered and signed treaty, perhaps (7)
61 Agreeing such acquaintance is slight (7)
64 Contribution from tenor makes this opera (5)
66 Photographer's equipment for getting colour right (5)
67 Bringer of war's spoils (4)

TEST YOUR WORD POWER IN OUR CROSSWORD COMPETITION

CHAMPAGNE MOËT & CHANDON

A Methuselah of Moët & Chandon champagne as well as £100 will go to the sender of the first correct solution opened on January 15, 1996. Five runners up will each receive £100. Entries to: Christmas Jumbo Crossword, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Solution on January 20



NAME ....
ADDRESS ....
.... POSTCODE ....

Times Two Christmas Holiday Crossword

There are no prizes for this crossword. The answers will be published on Tuesday, December 26.

ACROSS

1 Nursery rhyme warning to insect (8,8,3,4,4)
15 Equal-pressure lines (7)
16 Having various shapes (11)
17 Close, stuffy (7)
18 Theatre, circus (10)
19 Flouts one contemptuously (6,2,4,4)
21 A nobody (9)
23 Cleaner of clothes (9)
25 Lover of Isolde (7)
26 Yellowish finch-like songbird (6)
27 Presumptuous appropriation (10)
29 A hangman (4,5)
33 What must be had beforehand (13)
36 Silhouette (7)
37 More certain (5)
38 Attends insufficiently (to) (8)
39 Unit of elec. power (8)
40 Found; determine (9)
42 Reverses; cranks (engine) (5,4)
43 Most drunk (8)
44 Get (workers) organised (8)
47 Foe (5)
48 Part of army division (7)
49 Wind from Scandinavia (5-8)
50 Relentless (9)
52 Drowsy condition (10)
54 Trollope county (6)
57 Shanty (3-4)
60 Inland-waterway vessel (5,4)
62 Exactly the same (9)
63 Unshaven look (4,6,6)
65 Taking great pleasure (10)
68 N hemisphere land-mass (7)
69 Equivocate (11)
70 Inherited (7)
71 First sign of distant relief (3,5,2,3,3,2,3,6)

DOWN

1 Treated violently (4,5,4)
2 Animal dung (9)
3 Well done! (5)
4 Hold in check (8)
5 Council leader's wife (4,8)
6 Bird of peace (4)
7 Big, predatory tropical fish (9)
8 Weather deity (4,3)
9 How the ever more powerful go (4,8,2,8)
10 S Arabia republic (5)
11 Thingummy; shelved stand (7)
12 Standard of comparison (9)
13 Ham it up (7)
14 Christian Orthodox community (7,6)
20 What Churchill offered (1940) (5,4,5,3,5)
22 In silence (11)
24 Exulted (8)
28 Apartness (9)
30 Gold Cup racecourse (10)
31 One that frightens (9)
32 Suitable for crops (10)
34 Alacrity (9)
35 Finest specimen (9)
37 Delegate commitment (11)
41 Talented as painter (8)
42 Original Aus. convict convoy (3,5,5)
45 Of the study of Pharaohs etc. (13)
46 Rebuke; punishment (12)
51 Leopold —, *Fantasia* conductor (9)
53 Career advancement (9)
55 Church-valuable keeper (9)
56 Baked sugar confection (8)
58 Unfavourable (7)
59 Giant David killed (7)
61 Fluid escape (7)
64 Dried coconut kernel (5)
66 Religious Indian (5)
67 Lower part of wall (4)

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هكذا من الأهل

MOËT & CHANDON GAMES

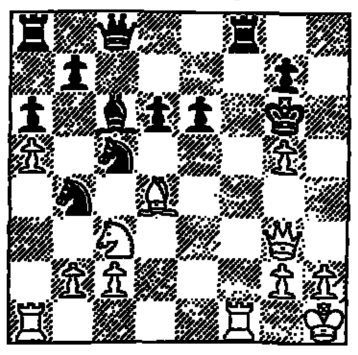
CHESS

by Raymond Keene

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

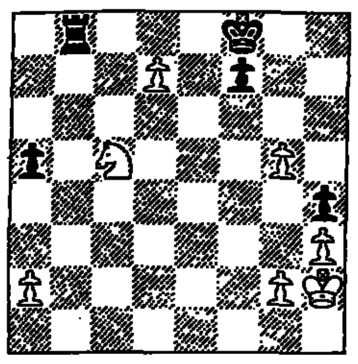
TO EXERCISE minds over the holidays, here are four of the most significant positions from the past year, to be solved over the festive season. I am looking only for the winner's next move, which, in each case, would have exerted a decisive influence on the rest of the game. For the winners there will be 50 copies of *Kasparov v. Short*, my book of *The Times* World Chess Championship, published by Batsford. The sender of the first correct answer out of the hat will also receive six magnums of champagne.

Position 1
Variation from Anand-Kasparov World Championship, Game 3



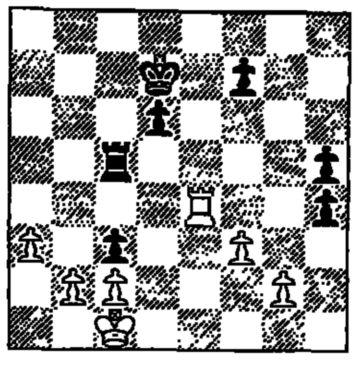
Here White has sacrificed a piece for an attack, but it now looks as if he has run out of steam. What is the best way for White to break the deadlock?

Position 2
Piket-Kasparov, Amsterdam 1995



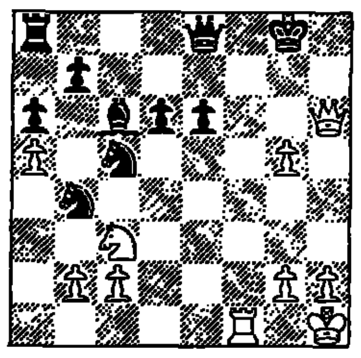
This game created a sensation in the summer when the young Dutch grandmaster Jeroen Piket defeated the world champion. By this stage Kasparov had already resigned. What was the winning coup that he had foreseen?

Position 3
Anand-Kasparov
World Championship, Game 17



In this endgame position, White is close to achieving a significant advantage, but he must find the correct move here. What is it?

Position 4
Variation from Anand-Kasparov World Championship, Game 3



Here White has sacrificed two pieces to proceed with his attack against the black king. What is his best way of continuing the attack?

Send the next move only in each case on a postcard to: Christmas Chess Competition, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN, by **Friday, December 29**. The winners will be announced on January 6, and will receive prizes by early February. Normal *Times* competition rules apply.

WINNING MOVE

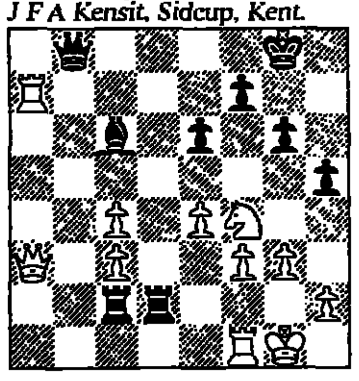
By Raymond Keene

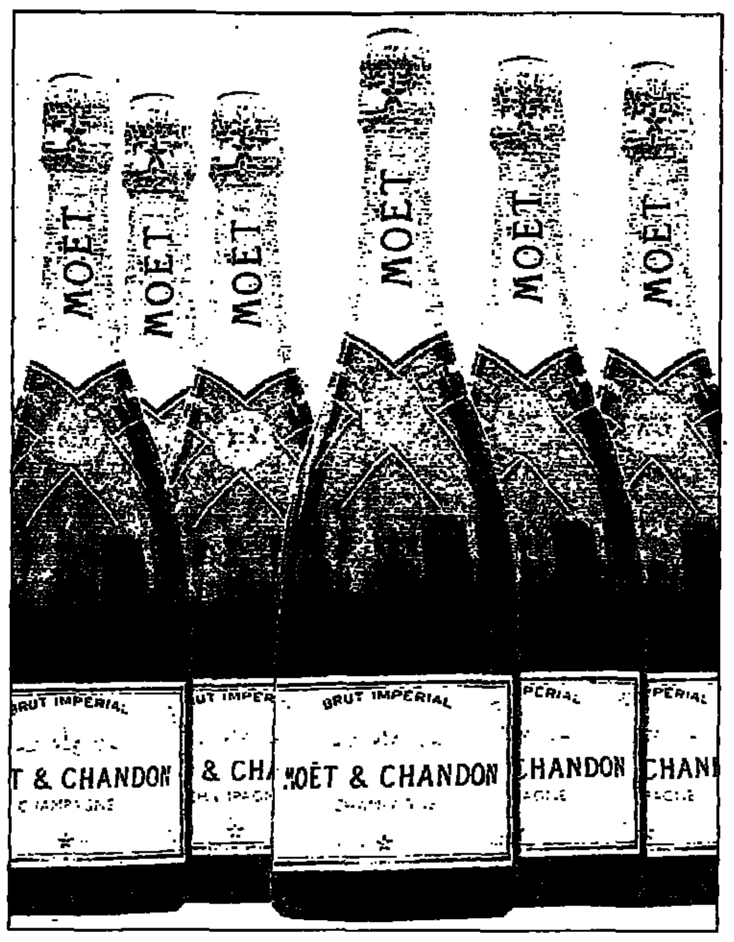
This position is from the game Habibi - Schurygin, Kecskemet 1995. *How did Black use his* doubled rooks on the 7th rank to greatest effect?

Send your answers on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday will win a British Chess Magazine publication. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 ... Qxh2+.

Last week's winners: T Hutchinson, Hove, E Sussex; H O Dovey, Thetford, Norfolk; *J F A Kensit, Sidcup, Kent.*





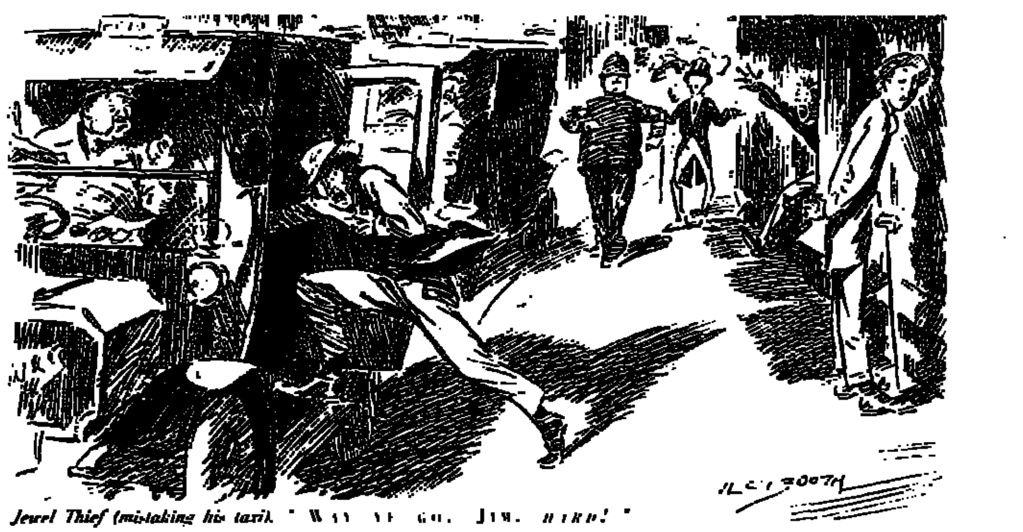
Thirty-six magnums to be won

THIS week the games page adds extra sparkle to the satisfaction of pitting your wits against the quiz masters and the puzzle-setters.

As a festive incentive, there are six magnums of Moët & Chandon champagne waiting *for the overall winners of each of* the following quizzes — Chess, Punchline, Computer Games, Bridge, Winning Move and The Listener Crossword.

Normal competition rules apply. The judges' decision is final and they cannot enter into correspondence.

PUNCHLINE



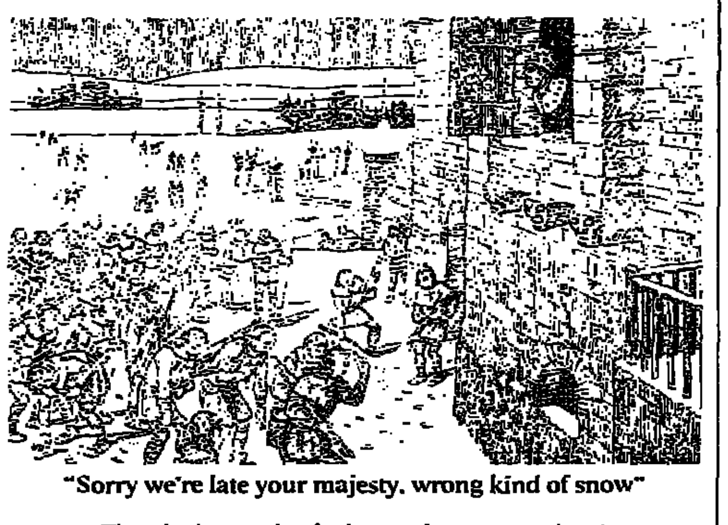
Jewel Thief (mistaking his taxi). "WAY VE GO, JIM. HARD!"
Chauffer (with his mouth full, deliberately). "WELL . . . I WAS JUST GETTIN' MY BIT O' DINNER. . . ."

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon above. The cartoon, from the Punch library, includes the contemporary caption.

The cartoon will be printed again next week on the Games page with a caption selected from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: *Christmas Cartoon caption (88)*. Weekend Games Page. *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The winner will receive six magnums of champagne. The editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is **Thursday, December 28**, at noon.



"Sorry we're late your majesty, wrong kind of snow"

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by D. J. Hitchcock, of Dundee

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

By Tim Wapshott

IT'S TIME for the annual quiz, offering readers the chance to win half a dozen magnums of Moët et Chandon champagne. To enter, study the general knowledge questions and multiple answers below. Choose one answer (a, b or c) for every question and mark your entry on a postcard and send to: Computer Games and Pastimes Quiz 95, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Illegible entries will be disqualified and the judges will not enter into correspondence.

Your entry must arrive by **Friday, December 29**, and the winner's name will be published on Saturday, January 6. If more than one person correctly answers all questions, the winner will be the first plucked from the hat.

1. "*I always say, keep a diary and* some day it'll keep you." Who said this? a) Mr Bean b) Alan Clark c) Mae West

2. "Let me make one thing absolutely clear. The National Health Service is safe with us." Immortal words from: a) John Major b) Margaret Thatcher c) Dracula

3. "Hell, I never vote *for* anybody. I always vote *against*." Words of wisdom by a) Peter Snow b) Robert Redford c) W.C. Fields

4. "A bank is a place that will lend you money if you can prove that you don't need it." So said: a) Bob Hope b) Norman Lamont c) J.P.Getty

5. "Will the people in the cheapest seats clap your hands? All the rest of you, if you'll just rattle your jewellery." So said: a) Liberace b) Elton John c) John Lennon

6. "I have nothing to declare except my genius." Modest words from: a) Oscar Wilde b) Chris Eubank c) Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards

7. "C'mon, baby, light my fire." Lyrics by: a) Oasis b) Jim Morrison c) Peter, Paul and Mary

8. Who is attributed as saying of Joan Bakewell that she was "the thinking man's crumpet"? Was it: *a) Jeremy Paxman b) Sir Robin* Day c) Frank Muir

9. "There can be no whitewash at the White House." So said which president? a) Jimmy Carter b) Richard Nixon c) George Bush

10. Which British playwright penned the line: "You were born with your legs apart. They'll send you to the grave in a Y-shaped coffin." Was it: a) Joe Orton b) Alan Bennett *c) Tom Stoppard*

11. "At 50, everyone has the face he deserves." So said: a) Rowan Atkinson b) Malcolm Muggeridge c) George Orwell

12. "You can tell a lot about a fellow's character by his way of eating jellybeans." Words by which American? a) Pee Wee Herman b) P.J. O'Rourke c) Ronald Reagan

13. "I can't get no satisfaction: I can't get no girl reaction." Song lyrics from: a) Lennon and McCartney b) Robson and Jerome c) Richards and Jagger

14. "Not only is there no God, but try getting a plumber on weekends." Name the atheist. a) George Burns b) Jack Dee c) Woody Allen

15. "Every time a child says, 'I don't believe in fairies' there is a little fairy somewhere that falls down dead." Name the book from which this is taken: a) *Peter Pan* b) *Lord of the Rings* c) *Sleeping Beauty*

16. "Marriage is a wonderful invention: but, then again, so is a bicycle repair kit." Who said this? a) Prince Charles b) Billy Connolly c) Lord Tebbit

17. "The trouble with Sigmund Freud is that he never played the Glasgow Empire Saturday night." So said? a) Jim Davidson b) Eric Morecambe c) Ken Dodd

18. "If A is a success in life, then A equals x plus y plus z. Work is x; y is play: *and z is keeping your mouth* shut." Who came up with this theory? a) Albert Einstein b) Jerry Lewis c) Sir Clive Sinclair

Bette Davis: acid-tongued?

19. "She ran the whole gamut of the emotions from A to B." Acid-tongued critic Dorothy Parker said this about which Hollywood legend: a) Bette Davis b) Lana Turner *c) Katharine Hepburn*

20. "I never hated a man enough to give him diamonds back." So said: a) Zsa Zsa Gabor b) Mae West c) Phyllis Diller

21. "Actors are cattle." That was the considered opinion of which director? a) Sir Peter Hall b) Alfred Hitchcock c) Stanley Kubrick

22. "You're not drunk if you can lie on the floor without holding on." Stirring stuff from: a) Oliver Reed b) Peter O'Toole c) Dean Martin

23. "I wasn't kissing her. I was just whispering in her mouth." Which Marx brother said this: a) Groucho *b) Chico c) Harpo*

24. Who said: "I never forget a face, but in your case I'll be glad to make an exception." a) Groucho Marx b) Winston Churchill c) Hugh Grant

25. Which Liberal leader delivered the soundbite: "I have the good fortune to be the first Liberal leader for over half a century who is able to say to you at the end of our annual assembly: go back to your constituencies and prepare for government." *a) Jeremy Thorpe* b) David Steel c) Paddy Ashdown

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

THE scoring of this year's competition has an egalitarian twist. Grand Masters will be *handicapped ten points*, and Life Masters five points. Please state if you are in either of these categories. Handicap of 15 points for any ringer that I spot.

1. Two ex-internationals held the North-South hands.

Dir North. Game all, Rubber bridge

North
♠642
♥AJ95
♦104
♣K532

West
♠KQJ98
♥-
♦KJ876
♣QJ9

East
♠753
♥108762
♦3
♣10764

South
♠A10
♥KQ43
♦AQ952
♣A8

This was their auction:

W	N	E	S
-	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♠
Dble	Pass	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

Contract: Six Hearts doubled, by South. Lead: king of spades.

This *ludicrous contract* went four off, giving East-West 1,100:

(i) Assign the blame: a) North 0% b) North 20% c) North 50% *d) North 100% (20 points)*

(ii) Which were the worst three bids in the auction (5 points for each "worst" bid)

2. You are the declarer in Six Diamonds on the hand below:

North
♠Q7
♥8752
♦KJ8
♣K983

South
♠AKJ5
♥6
♦AQ1094
♣AJ5

West leads the ace of hearts and continues with the king. How do you play after ruffing the second heart? (15 points)

3. Trivia — some easy points for the regular readers. All quotes appeared in *The Times* bridge columns in 1995. Five points each. Who said:

(i) 'There's only one player in this partnership who can lead trump, and it ain't you kid.'

(ii) 'No signals. I will know your distribution better than you do'

(iii) 'Grazie' when he should have said 'Thank you'

Answers, on a postcard please, to Christmas Bridge Competition, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN, by Friday, **December 29**. The winners' names will be published on Saturday, January 6. Six magnums of champagne for the first correct entry out of the hat. Five runners up will receive copies of Albert Dormer's new book, *Dormer on Deduction*. Six prizes will be allotted by random draw — annual subscriptions to *International Popular Bridge, Bridge Magazine* and *Bridge Plus*.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

RITSU
a. A Buddhist sect
b. Japanese pilau
c. A type of goldfish

PREDATIVE
a. The possessive dative
b. Predatory
c. Preceding temporally

RUPESTRAL
a. Growing on rocks
b. Questing for
c. A gland

OBOSOM
a. Animal without breasts
b. A Nigerian yam
c. A minor deity

Answers on page 15

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No. 3337: Christmas Cards by Smokey

Clues are of four types; there are 13 of each.

CHASE THE ACE (CH): Definitions and numbers in brackets refer to the full answer, but the cryptic indication refers to the light to be entered in the diagram.

FIND THE LADY (FL): Part of the answer is a girl's name. Solvers need to find where the lady is in the word — in two cases, it is in the right place.

RUMMY (RM): An anagram of the answer forms the light.

SNAP (SN): The clue defines two words, each of which needs to have one letter altered to form the light. For instance, clues to STRINGER and SPRINTER might yield the answer SPRINGER.

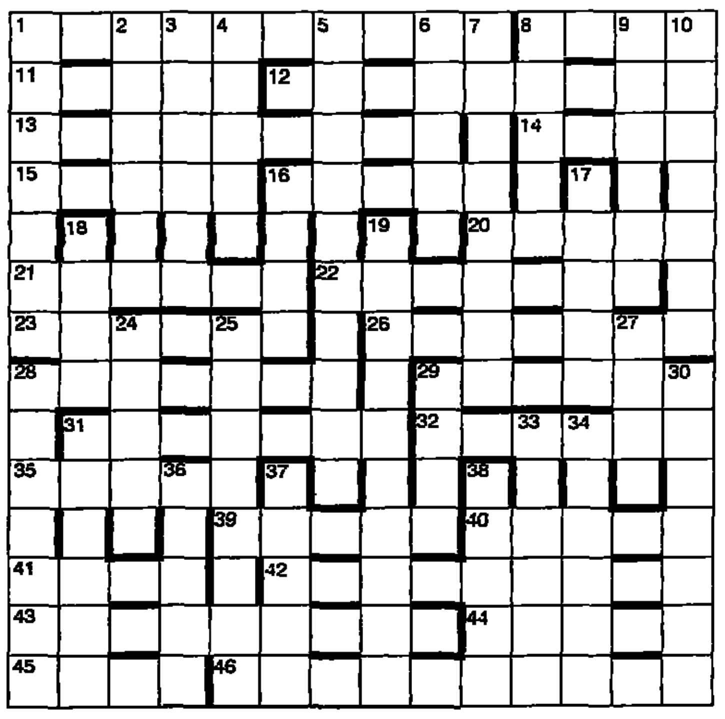
Chambers (1993 Edition) is recommended. There are several proper names among among the answers to clues, one of which is a brand name.

ACROSS

1 (FL) Mafia boss in Italian town fixes the stakes (10)
8 (CH) Tree brought back in for December (5)
11 *(SN) Operatic songs from the continent (5)*
12 (RM) Officers holding a candle to other soldiers? (9)
13 (RM) It recurs with sign of inflammation and fatigue (9)
14 (CH) Partly sweltering in India, you might need this hat (5)
15 (SN) Nests, perhaps, for birds of peace (5)
16 (SN) Apron, something left by the milkman (5)
20 *(SN) Author Ira's start (5)*
21 (CH) Dark patch in the Milky Way makes clocks go wonky (8, 2 words)
22 (SN) Where pandas might be kept, and lemurs (7)
23 (CH) Old-fashioned picture palaces displaying neat writing (7)
26 (FL) Dirges — church banished flowery trumpets (7)
28 *(FL) No car? It turns out to be wrong (7)*
29 (CH) Restless wanderer bound to suffer setback when gripped by disease (8)
31 (RM) It's less pleasant when anti-noise faction confronts row (7)
32 (RM) Drillers are tedious people? That's about right (6)
35 *(CH) Obtain money for travellers' cheques, may be — in* French centimes, mum (6)
39 (SN) Permit passage (5)
40 (RM) Channel accord (5)
41 (RM) To say it's French, this is pretty awful (4)
42 (RM) Spaniard, perhaps, is into strident opus like heavy metal (9)
43 (FL) Be acquainted with poverty, being without pounds, and in the doghouse? (9)
44 (SN) In musical terms, without colourful addition to "Hair" (5)
45 (SN) Fine smile (4)
46 (FL) Solemnly declare when cut began to bite? (10)

DOWN

1 (SN) Means of securing smoked fish? (7)
2 *(SN) Alarm a long way from the centre (6)*
3 (SN) Drinks for louts, those in a no-win situation (6)
4 (FL) At Murrayfield, loses points (5)
5 (FL) Sales rep packs large amount of Australian lotion (10)
6 (CH) In conclusion, bishop gets commission (6)
7 (FL) Dance-tune from homeless child stuck in part of desert (8)
8 *(CH) Clint E. fires one, playing part in the saddle (6)*
9 (SN) Amsterdam's fair killer of pests (6)
10 (FL) Scrape surface of one kind of blue, and you'll get red? (7)
16 (CH) Upturned beehive rises in a point (5)
17 (RM) Singer's bad habit? There's nothing in it (5)
18 (RM) Skip first and last sections of Malachi in the Old Testament (4)
19 (FL) Baritone singer of seasonal song? Not right, a boating song (10)
24 (SN) Part of fist (5)
25 (FL) Male architect going round a tree (8)
27 (RM) Such curs at heart, disagreeable (4)
28 (CH) Clinching final in Wimbledon, Becker trampled down thick harrier (9)
29 (CH) Shrub King George found on railway (6)
30 (FL) New-style Beltlane, such as can be legitimately held (7)
31 (CH) Rather more lustful sailors ride off (7)
33 (CH) English bird retiring in ship gives more than enough satisfaction (8)
34 (RM) More than one old dupe that is taken in by tricks (6)
36 (FL) Result: bathroom's lacking it (5)
37 (RM) Be inclined to disappear (5)
38 (RM) Islands where you can see South African bird (5)



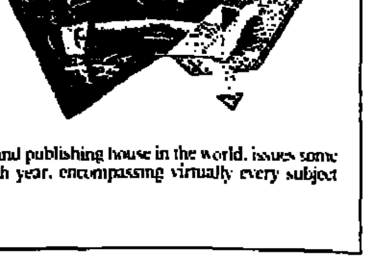
LISTENER CROSSWORD No. 3337

In association with CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

NAME..
ADDRESS..
....
....

Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No. 3337, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE. *Entries must be received by Thursday, January 4.*

The winner will receive: The champagne mentioned above plus **The Cambridge Encyclopedia**, the most up-to-date and comprehensive one-volume encyclopedia available, with over 36,000 entries; **The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language**, a highly illustrated format embracing every aspect of the English language in one volume; and **The Cambridge Guide to Literature**, covering all the *major writers and movements in literature* written in English up to the present. Two runners-up will receive **The Cambridge Guide to Literature.**



Cambridge University Press, the oldest printing and publishing house in the world, issues some 1,500 new publications in over 190 countries each year, encompassing virtually every subject seriously studied in the English-speaking world.

I	T	C	H	W	O	R	M	F	A	T	S	O
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Solution to No. 3334:
Every Second Counts by Bureaucrat

The superfluous words in the clues are in order. Stop, schooner, little, cheers, to, spurned, needed, twenty, *restrictions, deep*, invited, agaric, clean, line, astragal, thirteen, switchgear, missing, also, plus, blasphemous, money, engine, Egyptian, American, parts, will, enemies, street, Manchester, tipsters', anglers, noble, bus, traumatic, egg, French, calls, in, odd, stumbling, fashion, old, very, institution, studied, spangled, soubrette, jugged, drawing, allays, heater, using, tipple, planted, republic, interior, account, headache.

The theme is Thomas Carlyle (born 4 December 1795) found in every second letter of top and bottom lines of the grid. The three different addresses are Ecclefechan, *Craigenputtock and Chelsea. The 59 second letters of* the superfluous words in the clues spell out "T.C. I hope we English will long maintain our grand talent pour le silence" from Hero as King.

The winner is Dr Helen Ougham, of Aberystwyth, Dyfed. *The runners up are* Charles V. Jones of Birkenhead, Merseyside, and J.K.B. Illingworth, of Raunds, Northants.

tell me one good thing about your bank

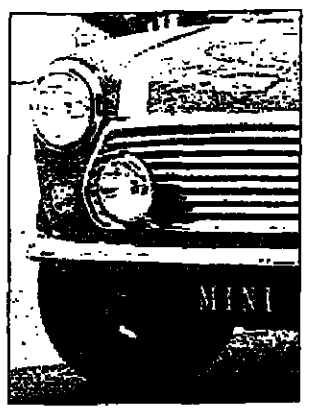
هكذا من ألاصل

The Bishop who suffers from impatience

Page 7

CAR 95

هكذا من الاصل



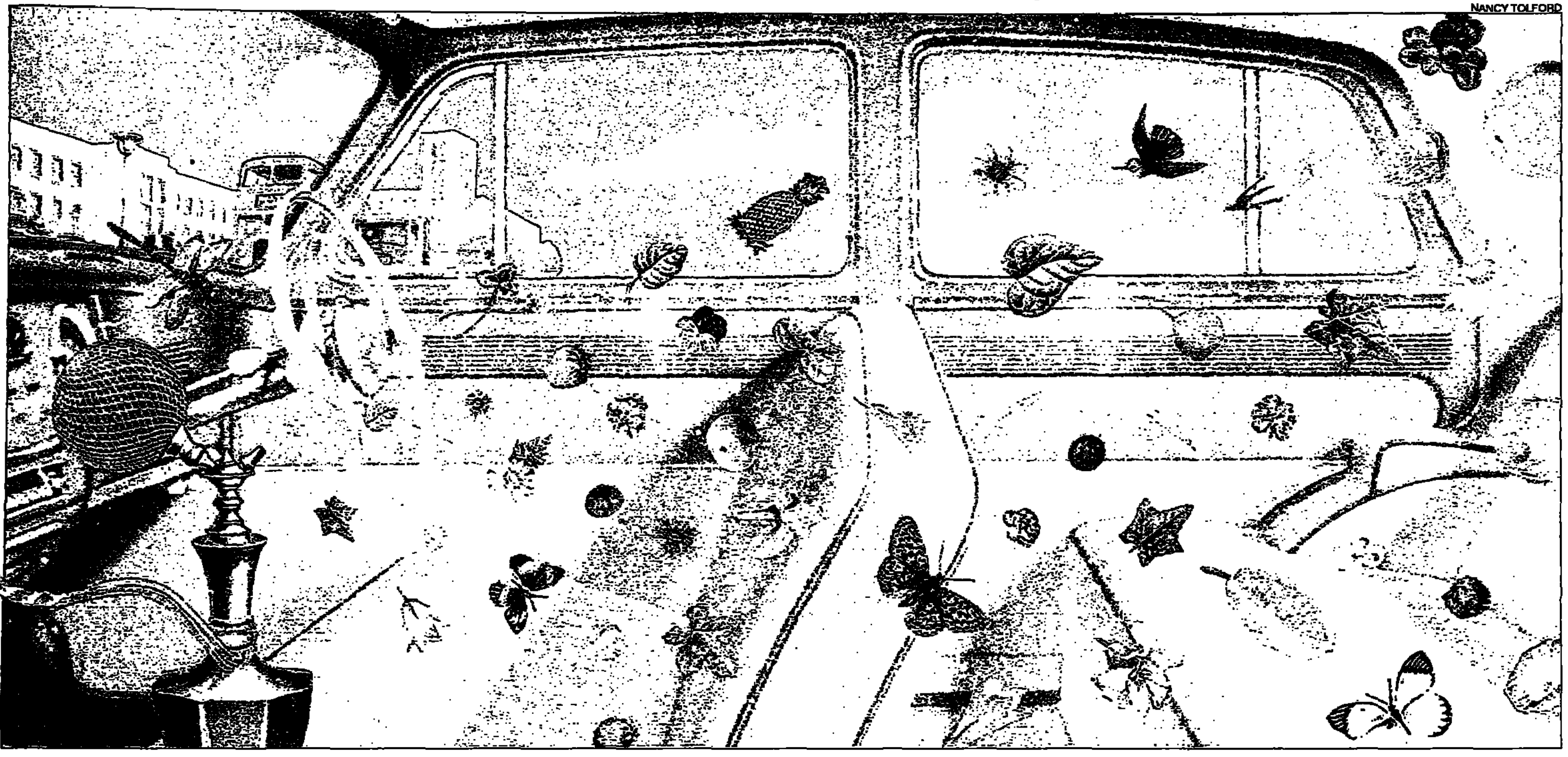
How do you follow the classic creation of 1959?

Page 3

SATURDAY DECEMBER 23 1995

A car air freshener in your stocking means you're part of a £124m business. **Helen Mound** sniffs out the facts

Scented with the sweet smell of success



NANCY TOLFORD

This weekend more than half a million bottles of perfume will be nestling beneath Christmas trees, waiting for loved ones to unwrap and discover.

Christmas accounts for almost 75 per cent of annual perfume sales, but it's not just wives, girlfriends and lovers that receive a fragrant present at this time of year — the loved-ones parked outside are also remembered.

According to the motor accessory industry, the most popular personal addition inside cars is an air freshener and this is the most successful season for automotive fragrance sales.

The Economist Intelligence Unit reports that 178 million car air fresheners were sold in the UK last year and the market is worth almost £124 million annually. Nick Phillips, managing director of Airfresh, a company that produces a range of automotive and domestic air fresheners, admits that Christmas is an important season for car air fresheners, with a 20 per cent increase in sales around December.

"The most popular are the Highland Fresh and Snoopy products. The tartan sachets are particularly popular because they come in festive scents such as cinnamon and apple, but around 3,000 Snoopy air fresheners are being sold every day in December, almost certainly for presents."

Within the last two years a bevy of fragrant gadgets have made it into our cars, ranging from impregnated cards, heat reactive oils, powders, sprays and ionisers to scented toys.

The EIU says the car air freshener market has seen a 10-15 per cent annual growth rate since 1992, which is likely to continue as manufacturers come up with increasingly curious smelly gadgets. And the growing range of products means more sophisticated scents, varying from fruits, flowers and famous perfumes, to leather and wood aromas designed to make your car smell like new.

This obsession with whiffy things in cars isn't to everyone's taste; personally, they make me sick. Ignorant of this when I was very young, my parents tried in vain to cure my car sickness, eventually tracking the cause down to the Feu Orange: those dangly cards that look like traffic lights, the amber light being the offending pong. They threw it away and were surprised when my sickness stopped, confirming that they didn't need the smelly thing after all.

However, my parents and I are clearly not the majority. Last year millions of motorists bought a Feu Orange, the second best selling car air freshener in Europe. The world's brand leader is Magic Tree: half of all motorists who buy car air fresheners use the impregnated cardboard trees that sell for £1.50 and dangle from rear-view mirrors.

According to Gary Barak, Editor of *Auto Parts & Accessories* magazine: "The air freshener market is very important for car accessory stores, it's a massive industry. And around Christmas time the products aren't just competing with themselves, they are competing in the fierce £10-gift market and attracting a great deal of impulse purchasers. It's not just smokers that use them, all sorts of people buy them to make their own cars and their friends' cars smell nice."

That belief has motivated Italian businessman Luigi Vitali to launch the ultimate Christmas present for your car — Car Perfume, a range of water-based perfumes that smell remarkably similar to popular designer fragrances. The Car Perfume plastic bottles are designed to fit an electronic diffuser which regularly sprays the scent into the car.

The 10 perfumes bear names with feminine appeal, such as Myth and Legend, and the 10 male fragrances flex macho muscle with names like Diablo and Turbo.

Only a dedicated devotee of fragrant cars is likely to bother bolting the little metal box under their dashboard and wiring the unit to the car battery; but once programmed the device will squirt your favourite Car Perfume at timed intervals to your nose's content. At least it means no more smelly teddies on the back shelf or whiffy distractions dangling from the rear-view mirror, but surely just opening a window would be an easier and cheaper way to freshen the car?

All cynicism aside, there has to be a market for Car Perfume since the real stuff makes billions of pounds for the cosmetics industry every year and car smellies generate millions. Vitali has had great success with the product in the US, where he also manufactures a leather fragrance, but he hasn't yet managed to convince UK stores that Car Perfume will sell.

Rudolph still has the job, but Santa has long been urged to exchange him for horse power

Driven once a year; high mileage

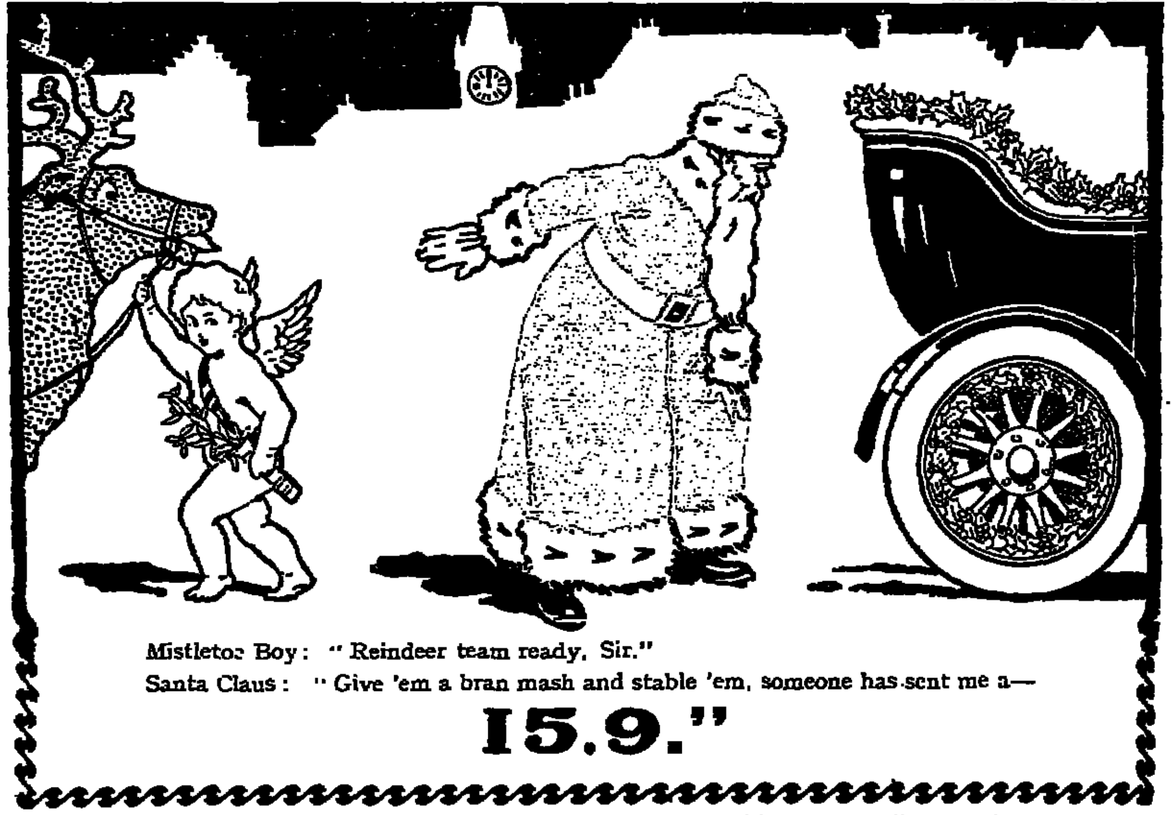
If you take a trip to Lapland to see Santa Claus in his palatial log grotto contructed by the Finnish tourist board you will be offered the option of a Ski-Doo safari through the surrounding winter wilderness.

Is this one of those nasty modern commercial ideas calculated to destroy the true spirit of Christmas? Not quite. For, as this advertisement from the *Autocar* of 1910 demonstrates, Santa first toyed with the idea of ditching his reindeer for motorised transport not long after the car came on the scene.

His instruction to "Give 'em a bran mash and stable 'em, someone has sent me a 15.9 [Arrol-Johnston]" might sound obscure today. But this famous Scottish car would have been a highly appropriate choice, *writes Lord Montagu of Beaulieu.*

For Arrol-Johnston was one of the Edwardian marques with polar credentials: in 1907 the company had built a special air-cooled car fitted with skis — a sort of primitive ancestor of the Ski-Doo — for Lt Ernest Shackleton's South Pole expedition. My father was Mechnical Transport Adviser to the expedition and Santa would surely have been impressed with the testimonial that Shackleton wrote on his return in 1909: "The car was extremely reliable and notwithstanding the extreme temperatures of 30 degrees below zero, no breakages of any description occurred." Shackleton ordered a new Arrol-Johnston as soon as he returned to Britain, so why shouldn't Father Christmas have followed suit?

NATIONAL MOTOR MUSEUM



Mistletoe Boy: "Reindeer team ready, Sir."

Santa Claus: "Give 'em a bran mash and stable 'em, someone has sent me a—

15.9."

From *Autocar* in 1910: the carmakers provided transport for Shackleton's expedition to the South Pole

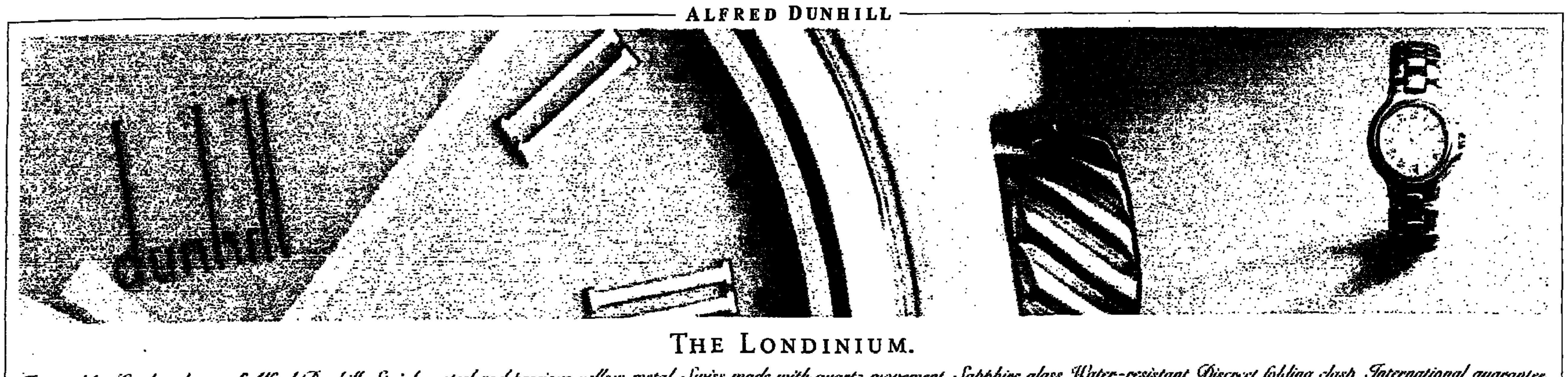
Almost as soon as motors started appearing on the road Santa was made aware of this alternative transport, despite his elevated position on a sleigh drawn by *Rangifer Tarandus*. In its first Christmas number in 1902, *Car Illustrated* had concluded that Santa Claus had been made an "anti-motorist" by the ever-increasing demand for car-related presents: "What with clutches, cams, coils and carburettors, and a million little ones shrieking for motor-cars in their stockings, I'm at my wit's end. I shall strike!" complained Santa in what the magazine called "a children's Christmas story for grown-ups".

The argument was that so many children were demanding "motor-somethings" as Christmas presents that poor old Santa had been forced to come up-to-date and found the change of pace too much to bear and walked out on the job, leaving the task of stocking-filling to "a father or a mother or a sister or a brother, who will attempt to carry on the work which Santa Claus has resigned".

Ten years later, at Christmas 1912, *Car Illustrated* depicted Father Christmas as a pedestrian, foresightedly telling a boy representing Automobilism in a snappy sports car: "I've seen many birthdays, you've seen only 15, but you'll see many more, my boy."

He was right. Christmases were made unforgettable for subsequent generations of children by the discovery of a Tri-ang pedal car at the foot of the Christmas tree or unwrapping the very Dinky Toy racing car set they had dreamed of all year or that special Chad Valley clockwork bus

Continued on Page 2



ALFRED DUNHILL

THE LONDINIUM.

Inspired by London, home of Alfred Dunhill. Stainless steel and precious yellow metal. Swiss made with quartz movement. Sapphire glass. Water-resistant. Discreet folding clasp. International guarantee.

Available at: Alfred Dunhill stores, 30 Duke Street, St James's. Harrods. Selfridges. Harvey Nichols and selected branches of Watches of Switzerland. The Goldsmiths Group. Mappin & Webb & leading jewellers nationwide.

Sought after since 1893.

AA GRIDLOCK GUIDE

Unless otherwise indicated, major roadworks continue over Christmas.

● **LONDON**

A40 Western Avenue, Acton. Major roadworks between Hilary Road in Acton and the Northern roundabout.

A406 North Circular Road, Upper Edmonton. Major roadworks continue at the Lea Valley viaduct.

A406 North Circular Road, Finchley. Major roadworks continue between the A1 and A1000 junctions.

A13 Limehouse. Between today January 2, Commercial Road closed in both directions between Branch Road and Butcher Row for replacement of a rail bridge. Expect delays through Limehouse Link tunnel, the diversionary route.

● **SOUTH-EAST**

M4 Berkshire. Major roadworks and contraflow between junctions 6 and 8/9 cause lengthy tailbacks daily. *Restrictions lifted for Christmas.*

M25 Surrey. Two sections of widening work, with lane closures and contraflows between junctions 6 and 8 and between junctions 9 and 10.

A27 East Sussex. Major roadworks at Firle, between Selmeston and Lewes, with temporary traffic lights. *Restrictions lifted for Christmas.*

A21 Kent. Roadworks and contraflow on Sevenoaks bypass. *Restrictions lifted for Christmas.*

● **SOUTH-WEST**

M4/M5 Avon. Work on the new Second Severn crossing continues, with restrictions around the Almondsbury and Aust interchanges and also on the M5 around junction 18. *Most restrictions lifted for Christmas.*

M32 Avon. Widening work continues on the link between junction 19 of the M4 and Bristol city centre, with lane closures and restrictions. *Most restrictions lifted for Christmas.*

M5 Somerset. Bridge repairs with lane closures both ways between junctions 21 and 22. *Restrictions lifted for Christmas.*

M5 Somerset. Roadworks with lane closures either side of junction 23.

A386 Devon. Temporary traffic lights for roadworks at the Moorland Links junction.

MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA

M50 Hereford & Worcester. Roadworks and lane closures in both directions between junctions 1 and 2. *Restrictions lifted for Christmas.*

M6 Staffordshire. One lane closed northbound for roadworks near junction 14 (A34). *Restrictions likely to be lifted over Christmas*

M1 Leicestershire. Roadworks and contraflow between junctions 21 and 22. *Restrictions lifted for Christmas.*

A6 Leicestershire. Major roadworks and contraflow at Lockington, between junction 24 of the M1 and Sawley Island. *Likely to continue over Christmas.*

A47 Norfolk. Two sets of major roadworks, at Terrington St John (between Wisbech and King's Lynn) and at Swaffham. *Swaffham works likely to continue over Christmas.*

● **NORTH**

M1 West Yorkshire. Roadworks and contraflow at the end of the motorway at junction 47.

M6 Cheshire. Widening work continues between junctions 20 and 22. *Contraflow continues, but with three lanes each way over Christmas.*

M6 Greater Manchester. Roadworks and lane closures between junctions 24 and 26. *Restrictions due to be lifted over Christmas*

A5063 Greater Manchester. Major roadworks and lane closures on Trafford Road, near junction with Pomona Strand. *Likely to remain over Christmas.*

A565 Merseyside. Major roadworks in Derby Road, Liverpool between Blackstone Road and Bankhall Street. *Likely to remain over Christmas.*

● **WALES**

M4 Gwent. Widening work continues in connection with the new Second Severn crossing between junctions 22 and 24. *Some restrictions likely to remain over Christmas.*

M4 Gwent. Between tomorrow and January 2, contraflow in operation through the Brynglas tunnels, near Newport (between junctions 25 and 26).

A449/A40 Gwent. Roadworks continue between Newport and Monmouth, with much of the route reduced to a single lane.

A467 Gwent. Roadworks with lane closures at junction with the A472 at Crumlin.

A48 West Glamorgan. Construction work with lane closures on all approaches to Wychtree roundabout at Morriston.

A4229 Mid Glamorgan. Roadworks and temporary traffic lights between Cornelly and Porthcawl.

A547 Gwynedd. Bridge repairs with temporary traffic lights near the A55 junction at Llandudno Junction. *Likely to remain over Christmas.*

A548 Clwyd. Roadworks and a contraflow between Oakenholt and Kelsterton. *Likely to remain over Christmas.*

● **SCOTLAND**

A749 Strathclyde. Dalmarnock Bridge in Glasgow closed southbound for repairs.

Motherwell. Airbles Road reduced to a single lane each way for major roadworks.

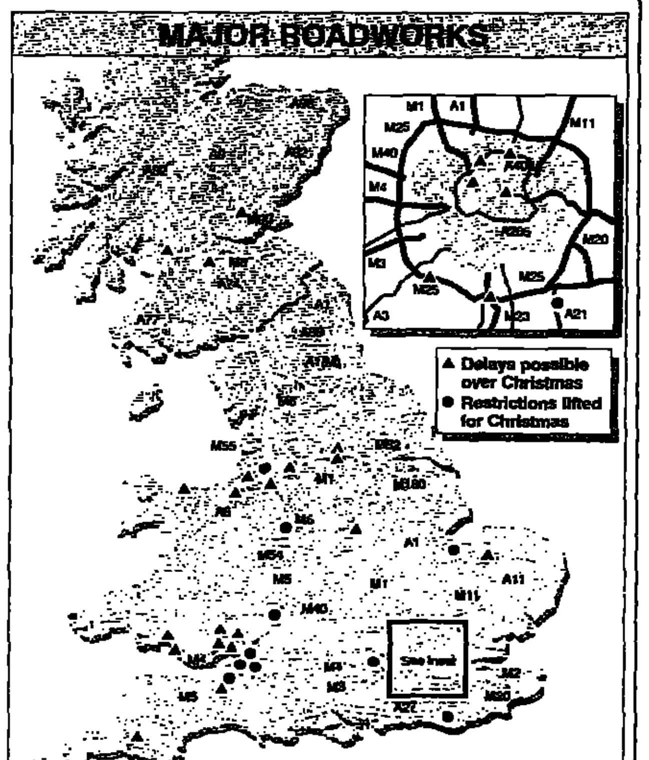
M90 Tayside. Major roadworks at junction 10 with lane closures in both directions.

● **NORTHERN IRELAND**

County Tyrone. Roadworks on the Omagh Bypass at the junction with Derry Road.

A6 County Antrim. Roadworks with temporary traffic lights on the Castledawson Bypass exit from the Killyneese Roundabout at Magherafelt.

MAJOR ROADWORKS



Cones hotline 0345 504030

NEWS IN BRIEF

Christmas list

THE RAC is asking motorists to make a few simple checks on their cars before the festive season to help it avoid breaking a record. Last year patrols answered 120,000 calls over Christmas, about 90 per cent of them to cars which would not start or had flat batteries.

They advise: checking anti-freeze, keeping a de-icer and wet-start spray and a scraper in the car and have a garage check the battery and starter motor if there have been any recent problems. If you are out when snow is likely also take jump leads, a tow rope, a small spade and a couple of old sacks to provide extra grip if you bog down in snow. As usual, RAC staff have volunteered to work on Christmas day to keep the five million members moving.

Pressure points

ONE WAY of reducing the likelihood of getting bogged down in snow is by keeping your tyres properly inflated. Recent reasearch by the National Tyre Distributors' Association found that 90 per cent of all vehicles checked had at least one wrongly inflated tyre, a third of them dangerously so. Such errors can increase the risk of skidding and reduce braking efficiency.

The NTDA suggests a check on pressures before Christmas and warns that tyres should only be deflated to cope with ice or snow in the most extreme conditions.

Sunny future

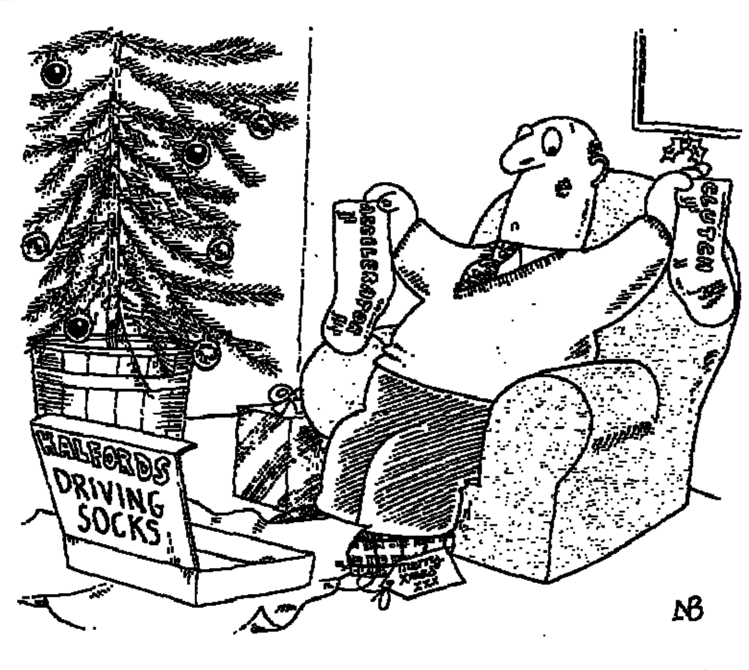
A BIT OF unlikely seasonal cheer comes from Tudor Webasto, Britain's leading maker of sunroofs. It may be the bit of equipment used least by motorists at this time of year, but they have just clinched orders worth more than £300 million to fit their roofs as original equipment to a whole series of new models being launched next year. They are investing another £5 million on production facilities at their Birmingham factory and a number of new jobs will be created as a result.

Not another chamois leather (it will only disappear like the others), no driving gloves and nothing that *smells . . .*

Meditation on St Halford's Eve

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Peter Barnard



Dear Santa Claus: What with VAT on reindeer fuel and Kenneth Clarke's continuing failure to exempt sleds from the road fund licence (though yours may be more than 25 years old), I expect you will want to get in and out of Britain even faster than usual this year. I have left my list with the patron saint of motorists, who is of course St Halford, to save you too much stop-start in my area.

Like you, St Halford is busy all year round, but comes into his own at Christmas. Actually, just after Christmas. That is the time of year when thousands of us trudge to the nearest St Halford's out-of-town superstore with our gift vouchers, received in the post from various aunts one cannot quite put a face to.

So this year my letter to you is more in the way of a plea for exclusions. I will gratefully receive whatever turns up, but there are some things I want a lot less than some other things.

Please, no more chamois leathers. I have had at least one every year for the past 20 years, with the result that I now have . . . none. I can remember putting each and every one of them in the boot, so where are they now? Admittedly, one was used in an emergency when a wooden dinghy sprung a leak. At least one other was used to wrap up some tools, which I promptly left by the roadside after changing a tyre. The pain from two sprained wrists probably affected my memory. The other chamois simply vanished.

Then there is the tin of de-icer. This is always in one of two places: inside one's house when the car is frozen up 20 miles away, or inside the car when the door lock is frozen.

I notice that this year St Halford has gone for blind spot mirrors in a big way. You can get them for £1.99 and you can get them for £19.99 and you can get them for all prices in between. Fits in seconds! No parts needed! Those are their selling points this year. But not to me. I have had several blind-spot mirrors, Santa, and, as I expect you have noticed while looking for 747s coming up behind you, there is no substitute for a glance over the shoulder.

A pair of driving gloves? Yes, I can do without them, too. Admittedly, they can be useful for wiping the windscreen, and indeed I keep one in the car for the purpose. One glove, that is, not one pair. I had a pair, but the other one eloped with the chamois leather.

Perhaps neither could resist the allure of the in-car air freshener. If you get a chance to look at the front page of this section while on auto pilot, you will see that the British spend £124 million a year on smells for cars. I would guess that £123.9 million of this is spent this week.

If so many in-car smells are available, I hear you muse, why have I stubbornly persisted with Essence of Tobacco? Aha! because I would rather die than be thought tacky. I prefer any stink to one that hangs from the rear view mirror or sits on the parcel shelf shaped like a doll. Why does the inside of a car have to smell like Miss Selfridge?

No, the things my car needs this Christmas tend not to turn up in the stocking. I confidently predict, for example, that you will not deliver a constant velocity joint, whatever that may be. I seriously doubt whether you are winging your way to my door with a set of brake pads. Nor, I would bet, are you bearing one of those devices garages use to put on wheel nuts so that we can slip discs trying to get them off on the hard shoulder of the M4 at 2am.

And quite right. What is Christmas for if not to give each other items we would never dream of buying for ourselves? It is indeed the thought that counts, and the most comforting thought is that what you are bringing me can be exchanged at St Halford's on December 27.

Hang on, just whose car am I driving here?

Peter Barnard

discovers that his prejudices are in danger

Those clever public relations people at the car companies are up to all kinds of tricks and seductions to encourage journalists to speak well of their products, but surely the Volvo people were going a bit far in sending me someone else's motor with their badging affixed to it?

You could tell at once it was not a Volvo because it had neither the appearance nor the performance of a charabanc. Inside it had a dashboard that looked as if it had been designed in the 20th century — and the late 20th century at that.

I rang up Volvo and said, hey, come off it, I wasn't born yesterday. The car I have been having a dig at in my column for this section is called a Volvo as in big ugly brute with hopeless performance, I said. Send me one of those, I said. I can't reinforce my prejudices in a motor like this.

They were rather miffed. They said that if I didn't believe them I could always pop round to the nearest showroom and compare like with like. Or I could crawl over it and under and look at part numbers and so forth.

So I did. And it was. It was a Volvo 850 all right. And it was so good that, having loaned it to me for a week, Volvo were lucky to wrench the thing out of my hands after a fortnight.

I have whacked it up and down motorways and chucked it round country bends. The thing refuses to make a whine of complaint, it simply won't come unglued. The ride quality is so good that, for the first time in 30 years, my wife managed to fall asleep — in a car I was driving.

The 850 is not of course devoid of all the Volvo characteristics: that imperious quality is still there, which is what has tended to make Volvo drivers insufferable almost by definition. But I would be the last to pretend that such a response is reasoned.

An odd thing, prejudice. The difficulty Volvo have had is that their cars have strong associations. Swedish associations. When the au pair trade started, young men such as I then was got into a right lather: the build quality was fantastic.

On closer contact (not that there was much) these strapping blondes seemed to lack performance. As with the women, so with the cars. Both had the leaden outlook of an Ingmar Bergman movie.

I cannot speak for the women, but as far as the cars go that imagery has far outlived the reality. Yet a Volvo still defines its driver. Drive one in the country and you are defined as a country type, drive one in town and you are presumed to have pretensions: Range Rover syndrome. Either way, dashing is not a word likely to attach itself to the Volvo driver.

But Range Rovers, though carrying a lot of labels, are not regarded as boring. Volvos are. The 850, though, is not a boring car. The estate version, which I drove, does not have its appearance helped by the rear lights stacked up to the roofline either side, but that is no longer just a Volvo device and it is undeniably safer than older lighting systems.

And this is the first Volvo I have been near that manages to attract a crowd. A small crowd, admittedly, but on three occasions when I went shopping I returned to find a little knot of people walking around it. One man summed it up perfectly: "You sure this is a Volvo?"

By that time I was. And by the time I handed it back I was cured of the journeys I used to make up the lane, to a nearby former chicken house where a neighbour keeps a Volvo Brabazon. Now that was a fine looking car, in its time. That was a car that always made you think: why can't Volvo make them like that any more? The 850 does not of course remotely resemble the Brabazon, but the principle applies: this is also a stylish car.

And, though it pains me to say it, the 850 is fun to drive. Fun to drive! Am I really sure it's a Volvo? Fairly.

COVER STORY

Continued from Page 1

that scuttled across the kitchen lino on its pressed tin wheels with that distinctive whirring.

Who doesn't remember the joy of starting to build a car chassis from the Christmas Meccano set and then the frustration of finding that it lacked enough gear wheels to make a working gearbox *and* a differential unit?

Full-size cars have changed the way we spend Christmas, too, but few motoring Christmases can have been as dramatic as that spent at the very dawn of motoring by Claude Johnson, first secretary of what became the Royal Automobile Club and subsequently the commercial genius behind Rolls-Royce.

Alfred Harmsworth, the newspaper tycoon, backed Johnson's idea of a 1,000-miles trial of motor cars to demonstrate their reliability and performance, and at Christmastide 1899 Johnson was surveying the route, driven by pioneer motorist Monty Grahame-White in a "Critchley" Daimler light car, fitted with a 5½-hp twin-cylinder engine in an effort to improve its miserable performance.

It was the sort of Christmas only seen on cards nowadays

It was the sort of Christmas only seen on cards nowadays, where everything was covered in deep snow: imagine the courage of Johnson and Grahame-White in climbing the hills of Westmorland in a feeble belt-driven car totally devoid of protection, in a blinding snowstorm so intense that the intrepid motorists had to dig their way through 13 miles of snowdrifts using the floorboards of the Daimler as impromptu shovels.

By the flickering light of their candle lamps, they took the frozen road over Dunmail Raise to Keswick, where they arrived at 3am on Christmas morning, not having eaten for over 15 hours. They were welcomed by the landlord of the George Inn, who woke the whole town with "a masterly post horn call" and had huge joints of ham and beef, half a cheddar cheese and cold plum pudding in front of the frozen travellers — and "two huge beakers of hot toddy" in their hands — within 15 minutes.

This must have been one of the first hotels in Britain to cater for customers arriving by car, and even today, when most country hotels depend on motorists for the bulk of their custom, few could match the George's welcome.

Volvo switches on the gas

VOLVO will add gas-powered 850 models to its catalogue early next summer with British motorists paying a premium of £3,000 for the clean and green option, *writes Hugh Hunston.*

But, unlike most previous bolt-on or retro-fit natural gas exercises, the bi-fuel saloon and estate car variants are factory-built models with full warranty and service approval. Running on compressed natural (methane) gas, the cars feature additional 80-litre (17.6 gallon) tanks fitted transversely across the luggage compartments, providing an incremental 150-mile range.

Volvo's technicians claim that in gas mode exhaust emissions register only one-tenth of the harmful substance benchmark set by Swedish environmental regulations, but the 2.5 litre, five-cylinder engine sacrifices 10 per cent of its power output.

Access to suitable pumps remains a major disadvantage, but Business Gas, a British Gas subsidiary, hopes to expand its existing network of nine outlets. At present, the gas stations are in Bristol, Dudley, Ipswich, Livingston, Loughborough, London (Old Kent Road), Southampton, Slough and Warrington.

The Chancellor recently cut CNG duty by 17 per cent, bringing the average price per gallon down to a highly attractive £1.77, but Business Gas stresses that the price may not remain low indefintely.

On the plus side, the compressed gas application generates 5 per cent lower fuel consumption than petrol and Volvo Car UK is pitching its environmentally "niche" cars at business users. These include socially-conscious local authorities.

At the push of a button on the central console, the bi-fuel 850 offers the option of more city-friendly motoring courtesy of the gas-powered alternative.

Volvo's Swedish parent company has its sights set on the US market in general and California in particular, as the gas-powered car exhaust pollutant levels register below the state's ultra low emission vehicle levels.

At present, there are around a million gas propelled vehicles worldwide, but Volvo is confident that figure will grow in the face of environmental pressures. By the end of the decade, the US alone should have one million cars of this type on its roads.

VOLVO 850GLT

Price: Tested version, £23,800.

Engine: 2435cc, 20-valve, five cylinders.

Gearbox: Five-speed manual or four-speed auto with overdrive.

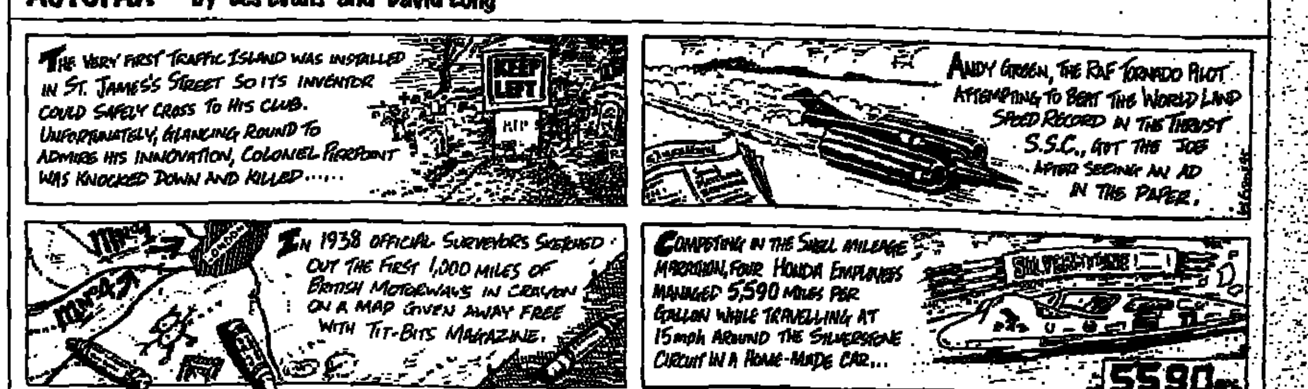
Brakes: Discs, anti-lock.

Performance: Top speed 131mph. 0-62 in 9.5seconds.

Economy: Urban cycle 21.9 (manual) 21.4 (auto), constant 56mph: 44.1 (manual and auto).

Equipment: Central locking, electric windows front and rear, air conditioning, heated front seats, eight-speaker, three-band RDS radio-cassette.

AUTOFAX by Les Evans and David Long


THE VERY FIRST TRAFFIC ISLAND WAS INSTALLED IN ST. JAMES'S STREET SO ITS INVENTOR COULD SAFELY CROSS TO HIS CLUB. UNFORTUNATELY, GLANCING ROUND TO ADMIRE HIS INNOVATION, COLONEL PIERPOINT WAS KNOCKED DOWN AND KILLED......
KEEP LEFT
RIP
ANDY GREEN, THE RAF TORNADO PILOT ATTEMPTING TO BEAT THE WORLD LAND SPEED RECORD IN THE THRUST S.S.C., GOT THE JOB AFTER SEEING AN AD IN THE PAPER.
IN 1938 OFFICIAL SURVEYORS SKETCHED OUT THE FIRST 1,000 MILES OF BRITISH MOTORWAYS IN CRAYON ON A MAP GIVEN AWAY FREE WITH TIT-BITS MAGAZINE.
COMPETING IN THE SHELL MILEAGE MARATHON, FOUR HONDA EMPLOYEES MANAGED 5,590 MILES PER GALLON WHILE TRAVELLING AT 15mph AROUND THE SILVERSTONE CIRCUIT IN A HOME-MADE CAR...
5590mpg

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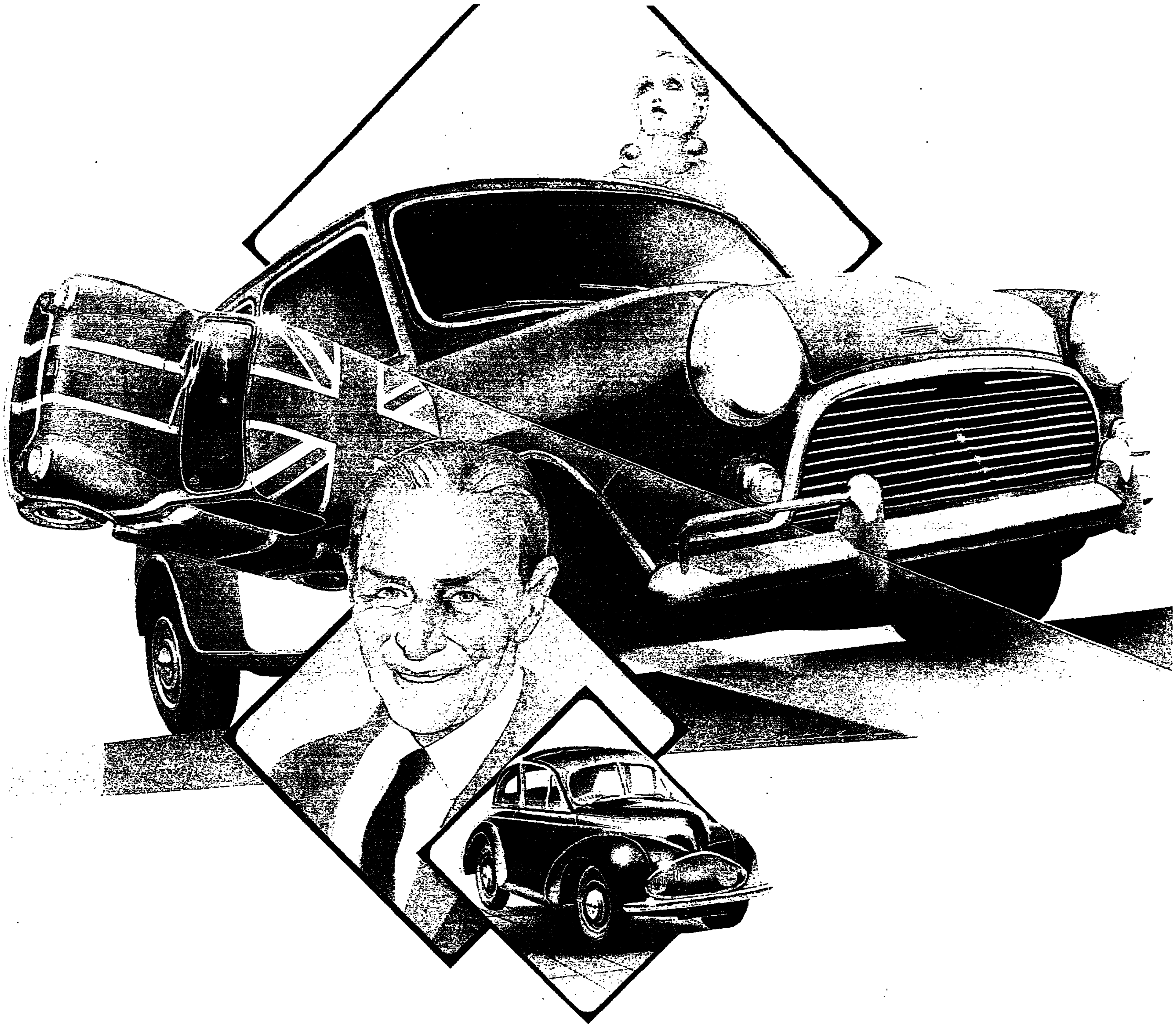
In his series on motoring giants, **Lord Montagu of Beaulieu** profiles the designer of the Car of the Century



Designed in miniature: Alec Issigonis with, clockwise from left, the "Union Jack" original 1959 Mini, the Mini Cooper, Monte Carlo winner in 1964, and the wartime Mosquito, later the Morris Minor. Illustration by Philip Castle

No small achievement

Best known as a designer of *small cars such as the Morris* Minor and Mini, Alec Issigonis spent his boyhood admiring very large machinery, the stationary engines that powered his father's marine engineering factory.

Issigonis was born in Smyrna (now Izmir), Turkey, in 1906, the son of a Greek-born British subject, Constantine Issigonis, and a Bavarian girl. The First World War ended their settled, *prosperous existence for, to the Turks,* they were enemy aliens and were interned for the duration. In 1919 a small strip of land which included Smyrna was given to Greece, but three years later the Turks invaded and the Issigonis family had to flee to Malta as penniless refugees.

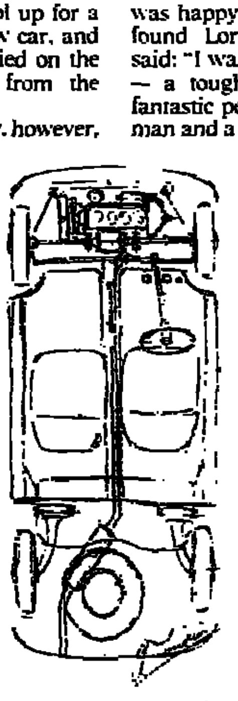
All this turmoil meant that Issigonis had very little formal education until he entered Battersea Polytechnic at the *age of 16 to study mechanical engineer*ing. He was not a brilliant student and could never master mathematics, but he found a job in a London research office where he worked on a semi-*automatic transmission.* The introduction of synchromesh by General Motors in 1928 made him feel he was wasting his time, and he moved to Humber, where he worked in the drawing office under Bill Heynes, later to achieve fame with Jaguar.

In 1936 he moved to Morris where he was to design the Minor. During his time at Humber and Morris he lived with his mother, whose garage was steadily being taken over by the construction of a single-seater racing car called the Lightweight Special, using a supercharged engine from his road car, an Austin Seven Ulster sports. Though he later dismissed the Lightweight as "a frivolity in my life", it was a remarkable car with all-independent suspension and a streamlined body *reminiscent of the Mercedes* Grand Prix cars.

At Morris he worked on the suspension of the Ten saloon, and during the Second World War designed strange devices that were little more than motorised wheelbarrows, to be *dropped by parachute. Towards the* end of the war he began work on a complete car, code-named Mosquito, which was launched in 1948 as the Morris Minor. For it he designed his first engine, a flat-four, but the company could not afford to tool up for a new engine as well as a new car, and for its power the Minor relied on the old 918cc side-valve unit from the Series E Eight.

The rest of the car was new, however, with independent front suspension by torsion bars, rack-and-pinion steering and an all-enveloping body with the headlamps set into the side of the grille. It was not well received by the top brass at Morris. Sales director Donald Harrison referred to "this thing that Issigonis is doing", while Lord Nuffield called its creator "Issywassi ... what's his bloody name?" and said the car looked like a poached egg.

The trouble was that, in a car-starved world, the pre-war Series E Eight was selling very well, but would not have continued to do so into the 1950s, and it was a blessing for Morris, as well as for Issigonis, that chairman Sir Miles Thomas championed the Minor. When production ended in 1971, more than 1.5 million had been made.



An Issigonis sketch of the Mini layout

Issigonis was unhappy with the 1952 merger between Morris and Austin, which formed the British Motor Corporation, and accepted an invitation from Alvis to design a new high-performance quality car. This had a 3½-litre V8 engine with a single camshaft to each bank of cylinders and all-independent rubber suspension under patents from Alex Moulton, whose ideas were used on the Mini and BMC 1100 and 1300 designs. It was an advanced car, and the prototype reached 110mph, *excellent for a five-seater saloon in* 1954, but Alvis could not afford to tool up for a completely new body and the project was abandoned.

In 1955 Sir Leonard Lord, head of BMC, invited Issigonis back, and he was happy to return. Some may have found Lord abrasive, but Issigonis said: "I was glad to be back with Lord — a tough, wonderful man with a fantastic personality, a born businessman and a great production engineer."

Within a year of Issigonis's return, the Suez crisis brought about petrol rationing, and a crop of flimsy bubble cars came on to the market. Lord had no time for them. "We must drive these bloody awful bubble cars off the streets by designing a proper miniature car," he insisted. A 1½-litre car that Issigonis was working on was abandoned and all efforts devoted to a small car which could carry four people in comfort within the smallest possible exterior dimensions.

Issigonis relished this challenge, for small cars always interested him more than large ones. He drove Austin Sevens when his friends had Bentleys or 30/98 Vauxhalls, and the Lightweight was an example of the minimum overall size for a racing car. "A small car sets a tremendous design challenge, non-existent with a large one," he said.

He had wanted to give the Minor front-wheel drive, and now he had his chance with the project known as ADO 15 (Austin Design Office project 15). The engine was BMC's well-tried A-type, as used in the Austin A35, but mounted transversely to achieve a short bonnet. The gearbox was directly under the engine. The car was suspended by a radical all-*independent rubber system designed by Moulton.*

The body was of unitary construction and did not seem to be consciously styled. Its distinctive shape was evolved to suit its purpose, small wheel at each corner and a body to give the maximum space for the occupants. Yet it had, and still has 36 years later, an essentially functional attractiveness.

Only two years elapsed between the go-ahead for the ADO 15 project and its launch in August 1959, under the names Austin Seven and Morris Mini Minor. Issigonis attributed this speed to the fact that one man was responsible for the whole operation, thus avoiding time-wasting committee work. Lord's enthusiastic support meant the project encountered none of the opposition that beset the Minor.

It is hard to realise today how important the Mini has been. The transverse-engine, front-drive layout has, for nearly all cars below two litres' capacity, replaced the norm of in-line engine driving the rear wheels, which had been accepted since 1900. Everyone who drives a Clio or Golf, Metro or Micra, Fiesta or Escort, owes a debt to Alec Issigonis.

After the Mini came the ADO 16 series, sold as the Austin/Morris 1100 and 1300, then the 1800 which Issigonis thought was his best car, and the Maxi. He received a knighthood in 1969 and two years later retired from the British Leyland Motor Corporation, as his employers had become.

He was retained as a consultant, but sadly his genius was not appreciated by some of the top brass in BLMC and nothing came of his contributions. In his retirement he busied himself with hot-air balloons and railways, both in miniature. He was one of the few people who could perfect a steam locomotive in 00 gauge. Increasingly frail in later life, he died in his sleep just short of his 82nd birthday, in 1988. What a pity he could not have survived to see his Mini chosen by *Autocar* as their Car of the Century this year.

FOLLOW THAT CAR - BUT WITH WHAT?

The greatest tribute to Sir Alec Issigonis's genius in creating the *Mini is the dilemma faced by* Rover's *designers now in* their attempts to come up with a successor to the ground-breaking little car that still sells about 20,000 worldwide each year, *writes Alan Copps.*

Stricter crash-test legislation that would have put an end to it in 1997 has been put off by the European Commission and in its current form the car will now meet all safety and emissions requirements in Europe until 2003. But BMW which owns Rover is acutely aware that it cannot wait that long before replacing the car.

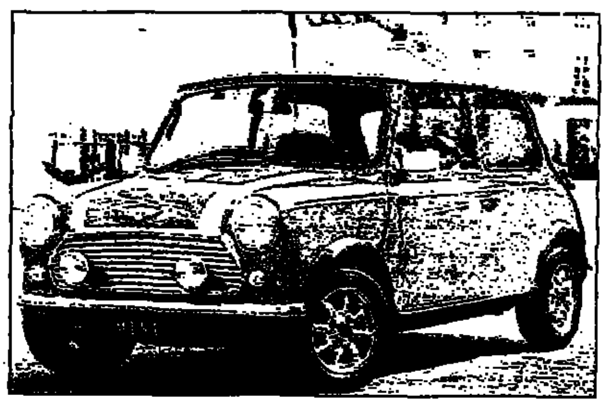
When the German company took over one of the first demands made by Bernd Pischetsrieder, its chairman, a renowned Mini enthusiast, was for a replacement that would prove as revolutionary as the Mini did in 1959. Since then more than 30 design proposals have been put forward and a decision to develop one of them must now be made within months if the new car is to be ready by the end of the decade.

Current thinking in Rover is that because of the Mini's icon status it's replacement will have to be a whole "lifestyle" package rather than just a car. Codenamed R59, to recall its origins, the new car will retain the front-wheel-drive, transverse engine layout and is expected to come in hatchback, coupe and cabriolet forms.

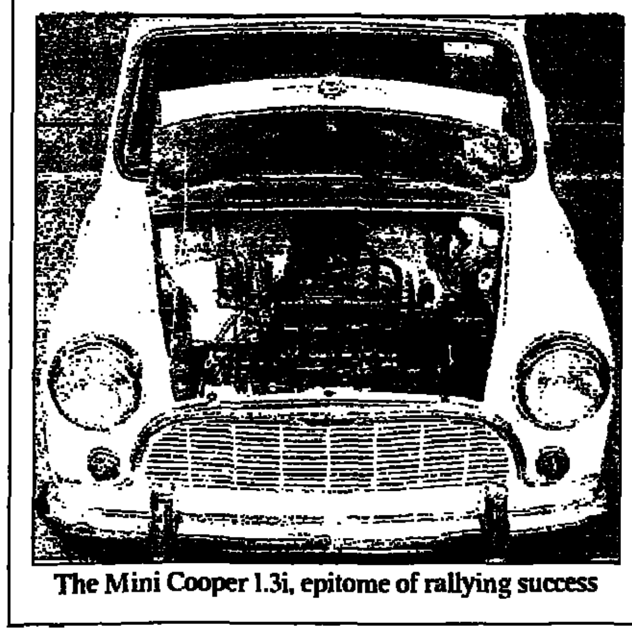
"We'll be developing a whole *range of accoutre*ments to go with the new model when it comes. It will be marketed as a lifestyle rather than just a car, in the same way that Harley Davidson has been marketed or our own Land Rover," said a spokesman this week.

But the new Mini cannot just be another tiny car fighting its corner in an already crowded section of the market. It has to generate the same reputation for sportiness and excellent handling that the original built up through its racing and rallying successes.

The 1960s are back in fashion and the Mini is the only car from that time which is still in production. The other mass-selling transports of the era, the Volkswagen Beetle and the Citroën 2CV are no longer with us. Rover knows that replacing its own little icon is crucial to the future.



With its radical sideways engine, the Mini has survived



The Mini Cooper 1.3i, epitome of rallying success

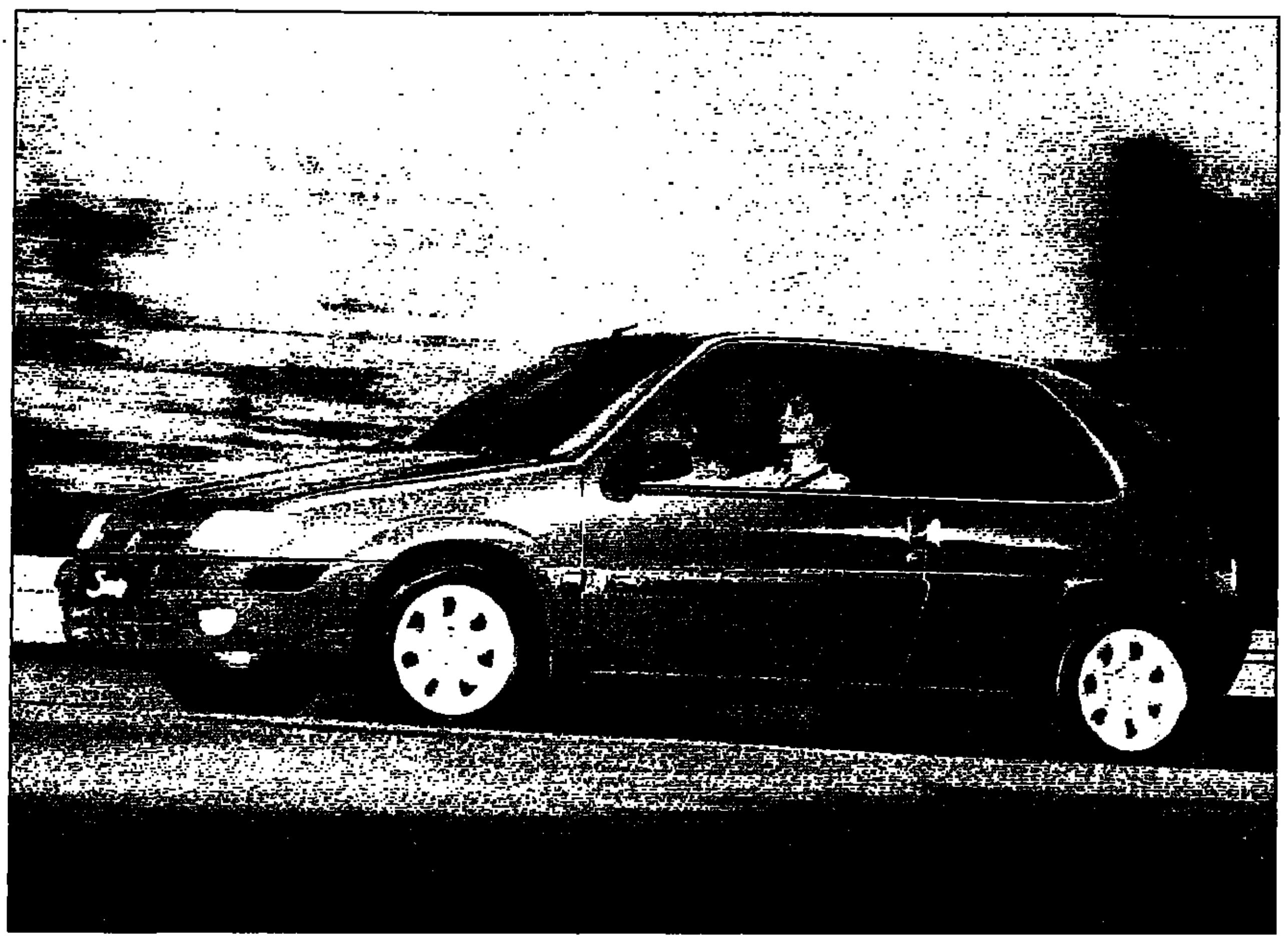
CAR TOONS

SEASONAL ROAD CLOSURES HO! HO! HO!
THERE'S FOG LIGHTS SIR, AND THERE'S FOG LIGHTS
I'M DRUNK. BETTER SAY YOU WERE DRIVING
LEFT
STOP CHILDREN
Haldane

A lightweight contender

Michael Scarlett

checks if the Citroën Saxo measures up


The Saxo: "it will bring to mind the saxophone, an instrument associated with good times and a friendly atmosphere"

Citroën's AX supermini, which was first seen in 1986, won many hearts for its neat looks, sparkling performance and, in the more popular small-engined and diesel versions, unrivalled fuel economy.

The last two, an uncommon combination of qualities, stemmed almost solely from the car's weight. In this, the first AX was a marvellous demonstration of how important it is to make cars lighter, something that nearly every other manufacturer has tended to ignore.

In 1-litre base form, the 1986 AX weighed 1,410lb, 15 per cent less than a comparable Metro. In 1991, more equipment and some stiffening for better refinement added 110lb, but this was still not too heavy.

Citroën has just announced the AX's ultimate replacement, called the Saxo, which goes on sale here in the spring. Although made on the same production line at Aulnay, north of Paris, as the AX — which, for the time being, stays in production — it is a bigger car.

The wheelbase, which effectively decides legroom, is 93.9ins, 3.9ins longer than the AX, and the overall length is 12ft 2.4ins, 7.6 ins longer.

The car also boasts new standards of crash safety, including dual airbags and anti-rollover stiffening of the roof, and claims to be quieter. With all these extras, the EU standard kerb weight quoted by the makers goes up to a minimum of 1,775lb, nearly 17 per cent more, which leaves the Saxo only slightly less heavy than most other superminis, even if nearly all of them have slightly larger wheelbases.

The Saxo is being launched as a three-door hatchback with four different engines, the existing AX 50ps 1-litre, 60ps 1.1-litre — both single-point fuel injected as before — and a multi-point injection version of the previous 1.4-litre units, still producing 75ps, plus a 90ps multi-point 1.6-litre: shortly after the launch, Citroën will add a sporting double overhead camshaft 120ps version of the 1.6.

All the engines necessarily follow current practice by complying with the still stiffer exhaust emission standards demanded for new cars in the EU by 1997. Diesel 58ps 1.5-litre, five-door and automatic versions will follow before the end of 1996.

Suspension is largely as AX, with coil-spring struts in front, and the PSA (Peugeot-Citroën) Group's tidy transverse torsion bar trailing arm rear; this has the practical advantage that it intrudes less into the boot space, helping Saxo to offer 9.9 cubic feet underneath the parcel shelf, 22.6 loaded, with the window sills and rear seats folded, or 33.6 loaded to the roof.

The announcement in Paris was a static affair, with no chance of test driving. But we could climb in — to find that adjusting the driver's seat for a six-footer, then getting into the back showed rear seat space somewhat borderline — knees pressed hard into the front seat and head touching the roof — something that happens in too many of today's new cars.

The body looks well protected against corrosion, with parts pre-galvanised, electro-galvanised, or otherwise protected according to vulnerability in addition to normal paint. Saxo has been styled in-house. Its shape is tolerable aerodynamically, but no more; the 0.32 to 0.34 range of drag coefficient is slightly worse than AX.

Why Saxo? Citroën talks of liking to have an X in the name, and that, as the press release says, "it will bring to mind the saxophone, an instrument associated in people's minds with good times and a friendly atmosphere". That, of course, depends on the people: for some the sax is fine in its place, as the most vulgar of musical instruments.

It promises to be sound, but not a leader

The most interesting technical advance is the use of electro-hydraulic power-assisted steering for top versions, with a pump driven by electricity instead of the engine, which is more efficient and cuts out needless fuel-wasting pumping.

Citroën fanatics with long memories — and those who despair of any progress in ordinary car suspension towards anything at least as good as the hydro-pneumatic systems available in the bigger Citroëns — will see the Saxo as another accountant-designed Peugeot (the 106 replacement will almost certainly be closely related). The car promises to be sound and enjoyable, but not a leader, unless mildly so in what its makers claim to be better refinement. For that, we must wait until we can drive the car, early next year.

COMPETITIONS

Winner will be a flying Scot

SO FAR, the fastest car Ian Patterson has been in is a Porsche 911 turbo. But as a winner of The Times/McLaren competition, he will be one of the few people to experience the awesome acceleration of the McLaren F1, the fastest ever road-going thoroughbred.

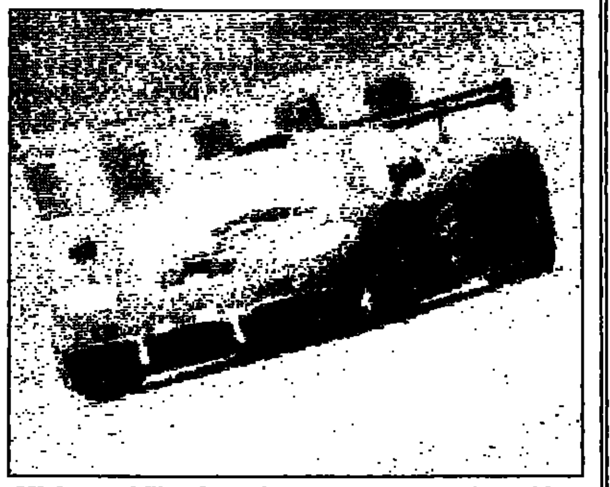
Mr Patterson, a motor racing fanatic who works for Aberdeen City Council, will be driven around the works test circuit where McLaren puts its 231mph, 627bhp F1 road machine and the new lightweight 668bhp McLaren LM — which delivers 0-60 in under three seconds — through their paces.

He will then be taken on a tour of the McLaran production and Formula One factories at Woking, Surrey, where he will see the build process of the world's most advanced composite car as well as F1 GTRs and Formula One cars being prepared for their forthcoming championships.

He also receives a limited edition print signed by the drivers who drove to victory at Le Mans this year, Yannick Dalmas, JJ Lehto and Masinori Sekiya, and a copy of the *McLaren at Le Mans* video. Thirty runners-up win either limited edition prints or copies of the video.

The video and limited edition prints can still be ordered direct from McLaren Cars for £13.95 and £21.95 respectively. For credit card orders phone 01372 457358 (fax 01372 459969), lines open 24-hours. Alternatively, send cheques, made payable to McLaren Cars Ltd, to McLaren Cars Video Offer, PO Box 44, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7AE.

Other *Car 95* winners are Roland Roberts from Stamford, Lincolnshire, who wins a complete interior car refurbishment, worth up to £2,000, by Stratstone of Wilmslow, Cheshire, in the Times Drive in Luxury Competition, and Andy Pardoe of Lutterworth, Leicestershire and Mrs M Scanlon of Lower Stondon, Bedfordshire, who both receive a pair of Dodge F1 boots, soles made from the tyres of Formula One racing cars, for winning our racing boots competition.


High-speed film: from the *McLaren at Le Mans* video

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The Bishop of Oxford tells **Andrew Pierce** about pointless virtues and the sin of impatience

Sermonising at the wheel

STEERING COLUMN

As most people unwind for a long and well-deserved Christmas break, the Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Rev Richard Harries, will be working harder than ever.

Having celebrated midnight Mass in his diocese on Christmas Eve, he plans to visit a night shelter for the homeless. An early start on Christmas Day will see him celebrate the Eucharist at his cathedral in Christ Church.

"I love Christmas because it is nice to take services and preach in the cathedral rather than being in the office," he says.

He enjoys a long and leisurely walk with his wife on Christmas afternoon followed by a traditional turkey dinner with his family on Christmas night.

One of the most high-profile clerics in the Church of England, he is an enthusiastic supporter of women priests and was favoured by many to succeed Lord Runcie as Archbishop of Canterbury.

How did you learn to drive?

In the Army, because my father was the brigadier in charge of Catterick. As part of my basic training he gave me a week's driving course with potential officers. It was daunting. I learnt on a motorbike, in a Land Rover, and a three-ton truck. It was quick and convenient, and I passed with flying colours.

What was your first car?

A low-slung sports car which had a rebuilt chassis. It had a home-made look, almost as if someone had thrown it together. It cost about £60. Then I went up-market and paid about £100 for a 1932 Singer.

What car do you drive now and why?

A Rover 620 SLI. As I live in Oxford, I do need to buy something from Austin Rover which is one of the largest local employers. I believe my predecessor bought a foreign car. When he went to Austin Rover for an official visit it did not go down well. This is an absolutely superb car. It is a sheer delight.

Do you enjoy driving?

Yes, provided I am not too tired. I don't have a chauffeur unless I go on a late night appointment.

What is your dream car?

I don't dream about cars. I had better not go into what I do dream about. I am satisfied with my present car. If I dream at night, I can't remember.

What is your most hated car?

Having plugged the Rover, I have a confession to make. I have never been able to stand the first Rover I had when I became Bishop of Oxford in 1987. It was slow, sluggish and unreliable. It nearly finished me off two or three times by packing up when I was hurtling down a motorway.

I told Rover I wanted them to take it back and decided to have a black Montego instead. But they had this one going through the assembly line marked Bishop of Oxford. It was much better.

Bishop Harries: "If I'm held up, the homily would not be terribly Christian"

What is your worst habit in the car?

I get rather nervous if anyone else is driving. I become over-anxious and get jittery if I see something which may be being driven too fast. I have to learn to shut up. It's all a delusion.

What infuriates you most about other drivers?

I am naturally impatient. Any kind of hold-up makes me absolutely furious. I am excessively time conscious, always rushing from one engagement to another. When there are delays on the motorway I nearly go round the bend. Well, I would go round one if there there was anywhere to go.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

If I am on my own, I often compose a sermon in my mind. I do this in a thoughtful and prayerful way, provided that I am not held up, in which case the tone of the homily would not be terribly Christian. I also pray in the car, in a reflective way, and not just for the drivers who go too fast and cause all my anxiety in the first place.

Have you ever had points on your licence?

I had a point for what they allege was parking dangerously when I was in Oxford in 1963 as a student. Happily, I have kept on the right side of the law since I have been ordained.

What do you listen to in the car?

Music on Radio 3, or one of the great unexpurgated novels. One of my favourites is the cassette of *Tess of the Durbervilles*.

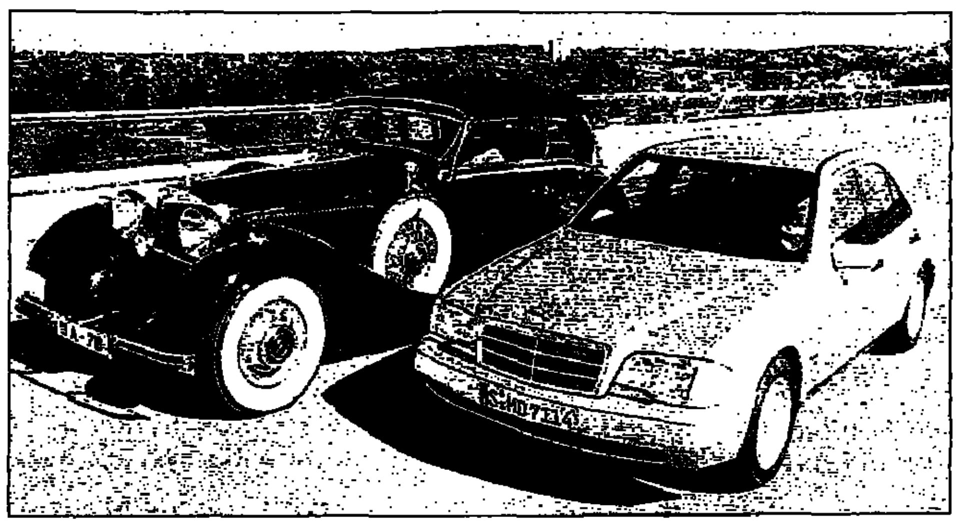
If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

I am not doctrinaire. But I would have at least six coaches an hour running to London. It is dangerous driving in Oxford because there are thousands of cyclists without lights. I would pass laws to make sure they do not ride without being lit up.

What is your most hated car commercial?

My eyes glaze over at all of them.

Roger Bell tests the new Mercedes-Benz Kompressor


Back to the future: the Mercedes-Benz Kompressor with the 500K of the Thirties

Force-fed for speed, but hard on the left knee

Superchargers are making a comeback. Jaguar uses one to boost performance of its scorching XJR saloon, as does Aston Martin on the related DB7. Now Mercedes-Benz has launched a go-faster version of its C-series. Tagged the Kompressor, it evokes memories of classic Mercs such as the legendary 500K and Silver Arrow racers of the Thirties.

Kompressor, supercharger, blower — they are one and the same, a mechanically driven pump that crams more oxygen into the combustion chambers. Just as embers glow when you blow on them, so the power of an engine burgeons when it's force-fed with air. A turbocharger is an air pump, too, but it's driven by a turbine whizzed round in the engine's exhaust gases, sapping less power. The snag is tardy response to the throttle when the engine is ambling and the exhaust flow weak. With a supercharger there is no delay between command and action. Power delivery is also more linear, and therefore more consistent. That's the theory, anyway.

In the C230K, it works a treat. Its new four-cylinder engine gives the same 193 horsepower as the more expensive six-cylinder C280. However, torque — the muscle behind the overtaking zap — is up. What's more, it peaks at lower engine speeds. Bury the accelerator and there's an eager, lag-free thrust (0-60mph in 8.0 seconds) that gives Merc's smallest saloon real sporting verve.

Mercedes claims its new engine is unusually clean: exhaust emissions undercut EU limits by 70 per cent. It also talks of exceptional economy, although the car's spirit may undermine that. Even though the American Eaton supercharger is magnetically disconnected when not required for light-throttle motoring, consumption is likely to be heavy if you exploit the car's potency.

The Kompressor is available on all C-class variants, but is probably at its best on the low-slung, stiffly sprung Sport. Steering is sharp and uncorrupted by engine torque (all Mercs have rear-wheel drive) and handling endearingly agile. You can hustle along twisty roads with almost as much panache as a Mini Cooper.

Pity the gearbox spoils the fun. It is so long since I drove a manual Merc. I had forgotten just how stiff, notchy and slow the gear change is. Although a DIY shift suits the car's sporting role, the C230K will be all the better for the five-speed automatic, coming as an option next August.

The clutch highlighted another irritation — a large, fixed-position steering wheel that bashed my left knee with every gear change. Height and/or reach adjustment — both standard on a £12,000 Ford Mondeo — would solve the problem, but you have to pay extra to get it on the £24,800 Merc. Still, the C230K undercuts the C280 by £1,700. I was impressed with the car's dynamism, but would have enjoyed it more without the ergonomic flaws.

MERCEDES C230K

Engine: 2295cc, four cylinders, 16 valves, belt-driven supercharger, 193bhp.
Transmission: wide-ratio five speed manual gearbox.
Performance: 0-60mph 8.0 seconds, top speed 143mph.
Fuel consumption: 34.5mpg (Euromix average).
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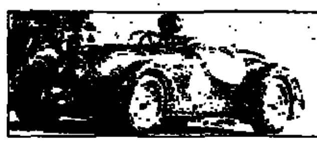

Brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrm

Stuart Birch looks at how sporty cars are coping with silent rights

If you must growl, do it quietly

JOEL CHANT

Noise differential: Nick Fell with, left, his raunchy TR8 and the MGF, victim of European hush-hush legislation

Tug the choke, turn the ignition key and the big carburettors gulp a rich breakfast of four-star leaded, eight spark plugs trigger explosions and the exhaust pumps out a chemistry lesson of gases.

With it all comes the sound — a sudden growl that settles to a rumble loud enough to give elderly ladies a mild touch of the vapours.

This is my old V8-engined Triumph sports car waking up. But most new sports cars are rather different. They have fuel injection instead of petrol-gulping carburettors, a catalytic converter to clean up the emissions act — and a muted exhaust note unlikely to disturb a sleeping baby.

Making engines atmosphere-friendly (Ford says it would take almost 50 of its new Zetec-SE Fiestas to produce the emissions of a single 1976 Fiesta) is right and proper and must be an on-going aim.

Making cars quieter is also essential. Noise pollution is a bane of modern society, so newly cars must meet the requirements of EC. drive-by noise legislation. This has just been tightened, with a new decibel limit of 74dB(A) for all sales from 1 October 1996. But the EC is mulling over even stricter rules, and most manufacturers regard their implementation as inevitable.

All this is environmentally responsible, but it does take away one of the delights of sports car driving — a growly engine and exhaust note.

Rover's new MG*F* is a victim of this hush-hush legislation. A superbly agile, rapid and distinctively designed car, it lacks one essential: it doesn't make the "right" noise.

Nick Fell, the MG*F*'s Project Director, knows all about "right" sports car sounds, for tucked away in his garage is another of those naughty, noisy V8 Triumphs with a TR8 badge on the boot lid and exhausts that look as if they might be related to the Albert Hall's organ pipes: "Yes, I do get satisfaction from hearing a nice engine and exhaust note, but the law is the law and we have given the MG*F* a characteristic engine note within the levels allowed. We believe the more powerful VVC engine has a fine voice at high revs.

"Rover works to reduce vehicle pollution, and that includes noise. I think that for sports cars to be relatively quiet is right and proper in the current era. There is also a matter of responsibility; rumbly sports cars were perhaps all right in their day but I'm not sure what people who were not in them thought about the noise. We believe in *responsible* fun."

Other new sports cars also lack that crisp bite of sound. Driving the BMW Z3 two-seater (due here next June) in the mountains of North Carolina was great fun, but its 1.9 litre 140bhp engine certainly didn't shout about its competence, and the Mazda MX-5 has no distinctive voice.

Ironically, very powerful sports cars — producing more than 200 bhp — face less severe constraints than lower powered "popular" models, says Mr Fell. He regards that as reasonable: "There are relatively few sports cars on the road with that sort of power, but add up the number of MX-5s, Toyota MR2s, Porsche 944s and, soon, MG*F*s, and you get to big numbers."

So a small, specialist company like TVR, whose cars use chunky V8s, can still let them sing out reasonably loudly.

But technology does allow compromises to be found. The new Ford Fiesta is hardly a sports car, but its clean-living Zetec-SE engine benefited from design input from motorcylcle specialists Yamaha and British consultancy, Ricardo. The result is that at high revs it sounds — if you have even a modest imagination — delightfully sporty.

In fact, Ford has specialists whose job it is to see that some of its cars are "tuned for sporty sound". In Fordspeak, the result is: "An intake system that adds a sporty note to the interior sound which enhances performance feel perception but doesn't affect driving comfort in a negative sense."

Some companies are definitely better than others at this sound business, while still apparently confident of conforming to EC rules. Alfa-Romeo are past masters of orchestrating engine and exhaust notes, while Honda produces engines which at high revs sound as if the Japanese Grand Prix were under the bonnet, albeit with the volume down. But they are confident of meeting all likely drive-by noise rules.

Even proper, well-behaved Mercedes-Benz can raise a growl. Its engineers are aware of the need for engines to sound right. The current SL can summon a mighty snarl if provoked by a right foot, and when the small two-seat SLK arrives next year, the supercharged Kompressor version will make the "right noises" say the company's engineers — without being socially intrusive.

At Saab, a V6 engine with asymmetric turbocharging is now under development and has a fine engine note that makes it sound like a V8, says Per Gillbrand, the company's turbocharger expert. Not much wrong with that, he adds.

But it looks increasingly as if the answer to the sports car sound will be an inside job with external growl limited to golden oldies. There have even been suggestions that a flap in the passenger compartment might be opened to admit engine noise on demand, while Lotus has designed active noise systems which can cancel unwanted noise or introduce sporty noise into the interior, even for cars which are totally unsporty. They can give a humble Citroën AX a sex change, making it sound to occupants like a Chevrolet Camaro — while outside the noise is as demure as ever.

Nick Fell at Rover is aware of all this, and of the fact that some owners of the new breed of sports cars will demand dinstinctive exhaust notes, just as the owners of MGBs did in the 1960s: "What may happen is that after-market sources will supply non-standard replacement exhausts and owners will bank on the fact that few constabularies will have drive-by noise equipment to catch them."

So, when Mr Fell takes delivery of his shiny new MG*F*, parking it alongside his growly TR8, would he consider buying an alternative exhaust system? He just chuckles . . . quietly, of course.

The MGF doesn't make the 'right' noise

DR DASHBOARD

What you might pay for that Christmas drink

Q I am a responsible motorist, but it is the festive season. So what should I do if I am stopped by the police after a couple of drinks?

A Be polite. Switch off the engine (and any blaring cassettes) without being asked and show every willingness to get out of the car.

Q And when I've done that, what happens next?

A The officer may thrust his or her face close to yours in an attempt to smell alcohol on your breath.

Q What happens if they can smell it?

A Don't deny having a drink, but make sure you tell them if you have just left a party or a pub. The breathalyser can give a false reading if you have just had a drink. At least 20 minutes should elapse between your last drink and using the machine.

Q I have heard some bizarre stories about beating the breathalyser . . .

A Sucking mints or taking a quick swig of cough medicine will not help. Hyperventilating might do some good, as the more fresh air you get in your lungs the better, but I cannot recommend it. Anyway, the officer will ask you to take a deep breath before blowing into the bag.

Q Are there circumstances in which I can refuse?

A Only a strong medical reason, such as a heart or lung condition. Even if you think you are justified in refusing, the police can challenge you in court and, if the magistrates agree with them, you will face the same penalities as if you had been convicted of drink/driving.

Q What will happen if the test proves positive?

A You will be taken to the police station for further tests. Remain polite and ask the police to ensure that your car is left in a safe position and is locked. Do not react to rough treatment. I am afraid I have been involved in cases where officers have pushed drivers in the hope that they will respond and can then be charged with assault.

Q What are my rights at the police station?

A Very few. You cannot delay taking another test on a more sophisticated breathalyser, although you may be allowed to call your solicitor first. If the machine registers under 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of your breath, you can leave. If it's between 35 and 50 mgs, you can ask for a blood or urine test. Above 50 mgs, you will be charged.

Q What is the punishment if the tests prove positive?

A You will be banned from driving for at least a year and fined according to your means. If you have had many more than "a couple of drinks", the ban will be longer and the fine greater. You can even be sent to prison.

Q Will I suffer in any other way?

A Some people have lost their jobs, and even when your licence is returned, you may find it difficult to get insurance and you will certainly have to pay a higher premium. It will also be virtually impossible to hire a car for ten years because of the endorsement on your licence.

Q Any final advice, apart from not drinking at all if I have to drive?

A The legal limit for driving is three units of alcohol — that's three halves of beer, three glasses of wine or three small shorts. For some people even that might be too much. If you know a couple drinks have an effect on you, then don't drink at all. Last year, the police tested a record 700,000 people in England and Wales for drink/driving. It's a sobering thought.

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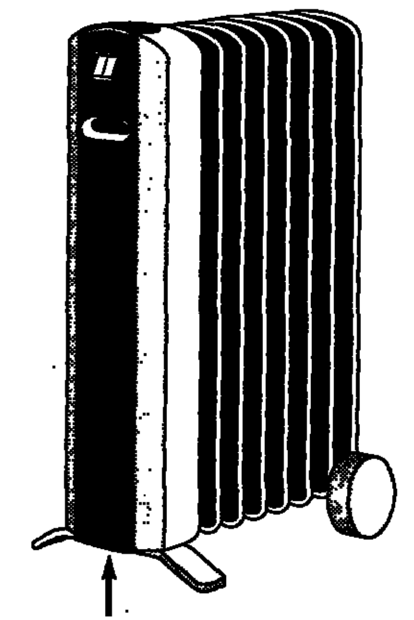
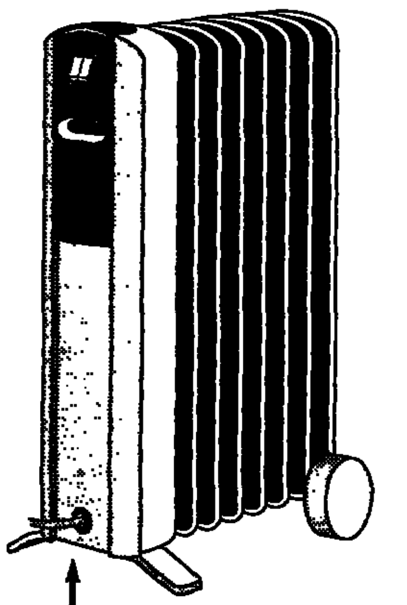
Dimplex New Style Column Electric Oil Filled Radiator



Model Numbers
CR1507, CR2009 & CR2009T
(model number is shown here underneath front end)



Model Number
BQ15CR
(model number is shown here underneath front end)

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These heaters have only been on sale since October 1995. If you have purchased one, you should follow this procedure:

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❷ Unplug it from the mains supply.
❸ Return it to the place of purchase for either a full refund or an alternative replacement.

If you have any problems whatsoever or if you are unable to return the product, please phone the Dimplex customer service line (0800 636434). There will be no charge for this call. Lines open from 8am to 8pm, daily (answerphone in use at all other times).

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THE TIMES

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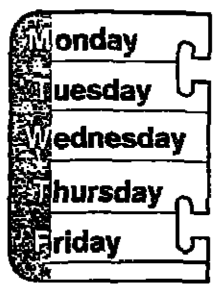
MELVYN MARCUS 22

The 'feel-good' factor in the Square Mile



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SPORT 32-40

Elland Road slump leads to questions over Howard's way

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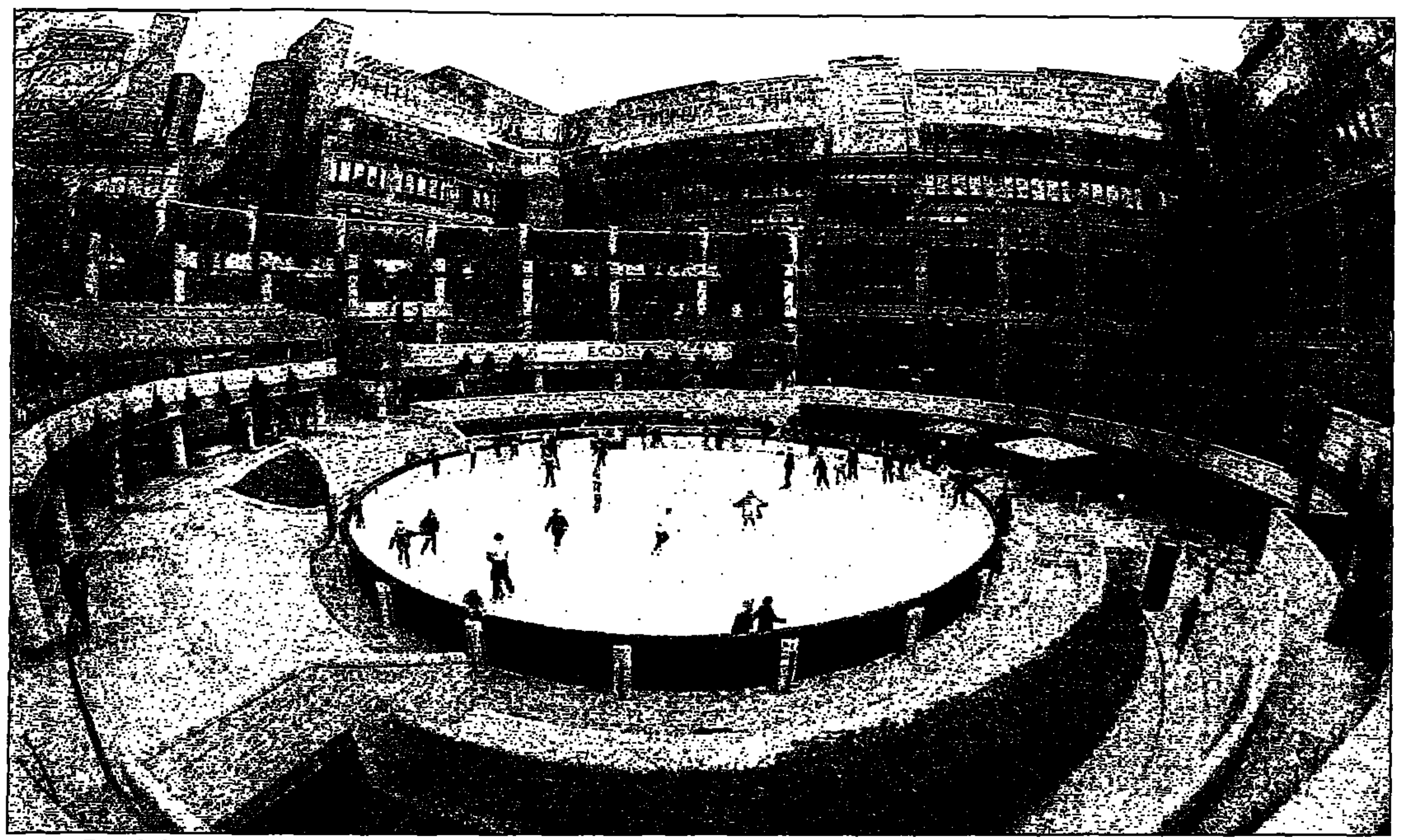
THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY DECEMBER 23 1995



Broad picture: a view across the winter ice rink of the City's Broadgate development. which is now solely owned by British Land

Overseas cases help push up SFO workload by 30%

By Robert Miller

FRAUDSTERS using international jurisdictions to avoid capture and conviction have led to a sharp increase in cases handled by the Serious Fraud Office.

George Staple, the director of the SFO, yesterday announced that since March the fraud office had dealt with 65 cases, a 30 per cent rise. He said: "All the indications are that our workload will continue to rise substantially. To meet the increase, we are recruiting more financial investigators, lawyers and support staff."

The rise in SFO cases is in part due to the lowering of the sum at risk needed to trigger an investigation, from £5 million to £1 million. But there was also an important extension granted to the fraud squad's Section 2 powers, which compel witnesses to provide information to assist an investigation. Now these powers can be used to help overseas investigating authorities.

Since February, the SFO has received 19 requests for assistance from overseas authorities, carried out seven searches on behalf of foreign agencies and issued 31 Section 2 notices, all in connection with international fraud.

Mr Staple said: "There has been a substantial demand from overseas for these investigative powers to be used. All the indications are that demand for use of these powers will increase further."

The most high-profile SFO investigation this year has been the £860 million collapse of Barings. Headed by James Kellock, a senior SFO lawyer, and Detective Superintendent Jerry Ohlson, from the City of London police, the Barings investigation typifies the stand being taken by international agencies, including the FBI and Interpol. The SFO refused to file an extradition request for Nick Leeson, the trader blamed for the Barings crash. Leeson offered to plead guilty to charges of false accounting and obtaining money by deception in a UK court. The SFO maintained, however, that the offences in question happened in Singapore and that was the most appropriate jurisdiction for a trial.

Among the successful cases concluded by the SFO were the conviction and imprisonment of Michael Ward, the former chairman and chief executive of European Leisure, for forging a document. In July, Muhammed Naviede, the former chairman and managing director of Arrows, was sentenced to nine years for fraudulent trading and making false statements after his business empire collapsed owing more than £100 million to some 20 banks. This week, Graham Durnford Ford, a former solicitor who masterminded a fraud in which £8 million was stolen from the estates of deceased clients, was sent to prison for ten years.

Cases still under investigation or about to come to trial include that of Cornelius Van Der Horst, who was in charge of repairs for the Exxon subsidiary that placed ship repairs for the company's British fleet. He has been charged with corruption and is alleged to have received some £250,000 in bribes.

Fraud squad officers are also investigating the circumstances surrounding the payment of a substantial sum of money to a former Bank of Boston official by persons connected with British Bus, the UK's largest privately owned bus company.

Ritblat's £121m buys the rest of Broadgate

By Martin Waller
Deputy City Editor

JOHN RITBLAT'S British Land has swallowed up the remaining half of the Broadgate development in the City that it does not already own. The deal, worth £121.5 million, was struck with receivers of Rosehaugh, one of the project's joint developers.

British Land bought the other member of the joint venture, Stanhope Properties, in January and so consolidated its hold over half the development. Since then, Mr Ritblat, the chairman, has been in talks with KPMG, the receiver, about acquiring the other half.

The Ludgate estate, off New Bridge Street, is also part of Broadgate Properties. The circular going to British Land's shareholders, who must agree the deal, puts a total value on both estates of £1.04 billion, barely changed from the previous valuation this summer. £826 million of it accounted for by the City site.

After completion, British Land will assume Broadgate's £800 million of debt, and this will be refinanced with its 60-odd banks at more advantageous rates.

John Weston Smith, finance director of British Land, said the high level of occupancy — Broadgate is almost full, Ludgate has voids of just 4 per cent — meant that the debt was affordable.

"It doesn't make us nervous because our own debt has been arranged with Broadgate in mind," he said.

The development would benefit from signs of an upturn in the City office property market. Broadgate itself covers 1.5 million sq ft, and this year more than 60,000 sq ft that was empty has found tenants. "It's got a long income run — the downside is restricted by that," said Mr Weston Smith. "The upside is all for us."

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3658.3	(+25.0)
Yield	3.90%	
FT-SE A All share	1787.69	(+10.78)
Nikkei	19744.42	(+91.17)
New York:		
Dow Jones	5114.59	(+18.06)*
S&P Composite	612.82	(+2.33)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	$5\frac{1}{2}$%*	($5\frac{7}{8}$%)
Long Bond	$111\frac{9}{16}$*	($110\frac{17}{32}$)
Yield	6.05%*	(6.10%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	$6\frac{15}{32}$%	($6\frac{15}{32}$%)
Liffe long gilt future (Dec)	$110\frac{9}{16}$	(110)

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.5430*	(1.5415)
London:		
$	1.5403	(1.5385)
DM	2.2250	(2.2147)
FFr	7.6260	(7.5930)
SFr	1.7946	(1.7808)
Yen	157.98	(156.55)
£ Index	83.0	(82.8)

DOLLAR

London:		
DM	1.4385*	(1.4386)
FFr	4.9330*	(4.9310)
SFr	1.1595*	(1.1570)
Yen	102.55*	(101.77)
$ Index	94.1	(93.8)

Tokyo close Yen 102.15

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar)	$17.38	($17.40)

GOLD

London close	$387.40	($387.75)

* denotes midday trading price

Stocks rise

British industry continued to build up stocks at an even greater pace in the third quarter than in the second, according to the latest figures from the CSO. Page 22

Appeal deadline for Leeson team

By Robert Miller

LAWYERS acting for Nick Leeson, the trader blamed for the £860 million collapse of Barings, must decide whether to appeal against his 6½-year prison sentence in Singapore by December 30. If he appeals and fails, Leeson faces having his sentence increased by a further year.

Stephen Pollard, of Kingsley Napley, Leeson's UK lawyer, said yesterday that he had been asked to advise John Koh, Leeson's Singapore lawyer, whether an appeal should be launched against the six-year sentence on a single charge of cheating. The six-months sentence on another, lesser, charge of cheating is not part of the appeal.

Mr Pollard, who said that Leeson's wife, Lisa, would spend Christmas with her parents in the UK, added that he and Mr Koh would consider the written explanation of the sentence handed down by Senior District Judge Richard Magnus. He said that Mr Koh's local knowledge and advice was the crucial factor in whether an appeal would be lodged. If Leeson decides not to appeal, he faces serving just under four years.

Leeson and his legal team were shocked at the length of the sentence after the prosecution, led by Lawrence Ang, the deputy public prosecutor, indicated that it did not seek a deterrent sentence. Mr Ang acknowledged Leeson's co-operation with the Commercial Affairs Department, which is still investigating the crash and which might press civil charges against others.

Share index on course for 3,700

DEALERS in London ended the last half-day session of the week in festive mood ahead of the long Christmas weekend, with predictions that leading shares will push through the 3,700 level before the end of the year (Philip Pangalos writes).

The rally continued as stocks were squeezed higher amid an absence of sellers, in spite of a volatile and nervous week after Monday's surprise 101-point dive by the Dow Jones industrial average. The FT-SE 100 index of leading shares closed near its best levels of the truncated session, ending up 25 points at 3,658.3, giving a 15.7 point gain on the week. The index has risen by 592.8 points so far this year — a healthy 19.3 per cent advance.

Markets, page 24

Managers poised to buy Lloyd's List

By Sarah Cunningham

A MANAGEMENT buyout team backed by 3i, the venture capital group, was poised last night to pay £82.5 million for *Lloyd's List*, Britain's oldest daily newspaper, and the Lloyd's of London Press (LLP) stable of publications.

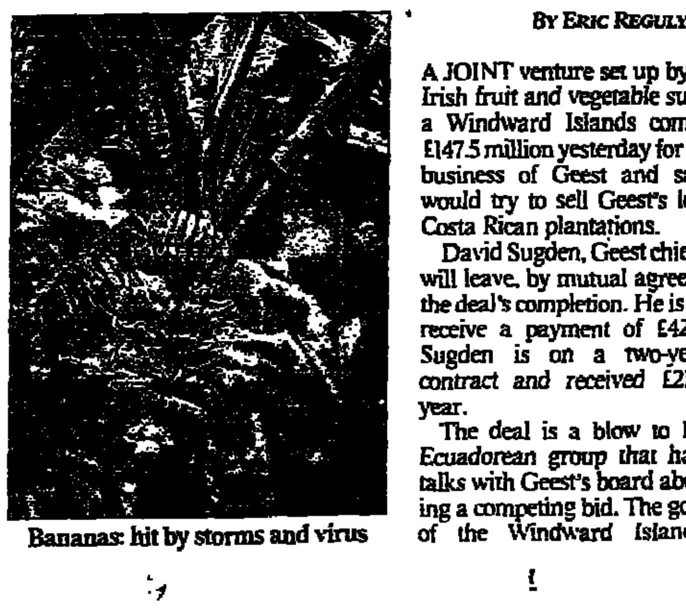
The LLP management team is believed to have fought off bids by Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing house, and the Economist group, which is half-owned by Pearson.

These bids were thought to have ranged between £60 million and £80 million. Analysts had valued the subsidiary at between £50 million and £70 million. *Lloyd's List*, founded 260 years ago, specialises in shipping, trade and insurance news. As well as the newspaper, LLP publishes a host of specialist magazines and reports. It employs about 300 people. Some older members of staff were understood to have been offered voluntary redundancy this week, just ahead of the sale. The Lloyd's corporation, advised by Lazards, decided to sell the profit-making publications as part of its £2.8 billion rescue plan.

LLP made a profit of £4 million last year under Iain Lindsay-Smith, the managing director, who heads the management buyout team.

One obstacle to the sale was the use of the Lloyd's name. Under the deal, Lloyd's is understood to have licensed the use of its name to the newly independent group, so that the newspaper can continue under the same title.

Fyffes buys Geest's banana business



Bananas: hit by storms and virus

By Eric Reguly

A JOINT venture set up by Fyffes, the Irish fruit and vegetable supplier, and a Windward Islands company paid £147.5 million yesterday for the banana business of Geest and said that it would try to sell Geest's loss-making Costa Rican plantations.

David Sugden, Geest chief executive, will leave, by mutual agreement, after the deal's completion. He is expected to receive a payment of £420,000. Mr Sugden is on a two-year rolling contract and received £210,000 last year.

The deal is a blow to Noboa, the Ecuadorean group that had been in talks with Geest's board about launching a competing bid. The governments of the Windward Islands largely opposed Noboa's interest because they feared that the company would eventually favour selling its own South American bananas in the crucial British and continental European markets.

Fyffes formed the joint venture with the Windward Islands Banana Development Company, or Wibdeco, whose shareholders are the governments of St Vincent, St Lucia, Dominica and Grenada and their banana-growing associations. Each is contributing £20 million; bank debt will supply the rest.

The joint venture will take offers on the Costa Rican plantations, which have cost Geest $75 million since 1991 and were devastated by Black Sigatoka virus in 1993. That, combined with storms in the Windward Islands and a severe banana oversupply in the European market, caused by delays in implementing new import quotas, have triggered several profit warnings from Geest over the past two years.

Geest's banana business reported an operating loss of £5.9 million in 1993. Last year saw better results, but Geest, the main importer of bananas into Britain since 1953, nonetheless decided to sell the volatile business.

The Fyffes-Wibdeco joint venture will face its biggest risk in 2002, when the Windward Islands lose preferential treatment in European markets.

Shares in Geest soared 39p to 192p. Geest will be left with a large fruit, vegetables and prepared salads business and is likely to expand by acquisition. Analysts consider it a possible takeover target.

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Bids and deals in velvet claret land

MELVYN MARCKUS

We are coming up to the time of year when some of my peers flex their fingers and write about crystal balls. I have never possessed a crystal ball but, should uncontrollable tears well, fret not. There are places where fires burn for real, the claret runs velvet and havanas soften to the touch. Such places are especially designed for those bereft of crystal balls.

In such places, old and new money rub shoulders (awkwardly) and murmur old and new tales, on occasions to urchins like myself. City analysts (about as common in such haunts as Mohican Indians) bewail the absence, among the population at large, of the "feel-good factor". I have no inclination to quarrel with this but in velvet claret land, seldom visited by members of the population at large, it is not difficult to discern that the City's fee-earning fraternity has enjoyed a lucrative 1995 and harbours distinctly optimistic feelings about the prospects for 1996.

Corporate finance departments represent the shop windows of the City's merchant banks. When a new financial year dawns, overheads loom large. Prospective merger and acquisition work, excluding transactions already in the pipeline, is in the lap of the Gods and, as was so often the case during the Eighties, those whom the Gods make mad. Put another way, the dummies in the shop windows have to be dressed. Masters of the Universe, particularly during their formative years, harbour dread fears of becoming members of the population at large. Such fears tend to stimulate an eagerness to cut deals.

In the event, the number of M&A deals cut in the UK during the past year showed little change over 1994. What changed was the scale of British industry's urge to merge as reflected in the value of the deals. According to *Acquisitions Monthly*, the number of M&A deals, including public and private companies, show a marginal decline at 1,500, although the total value of such deals has exploded from 1994's £25 billion to £66 billion. Bear in mind the fact that the scale of the deal and the scale of advisers' fees are not entirely unconnected and it is not difficult to appreciate why the feel-good factor is evident in the vicinity of EC2.

Merchant banks and investment banks represent the glamour houses but one of the laws of nature is that watering holes are shared by creatures great and small. The glamour firms, along with a few stockbroking outfits, have already made headlines in the context of annual bonus payments; significantly up, for the most part, on 1994, albeit below those for 1993. A vastly diminished glare falls on other indirect beneficiaries of the relentless quest for acquisitive growth. The big six accountants, led by the likes of Arthur Andersen and Price Waterhouse, law firms such as Freshfields and Linklaters & Paines, the silver-tongued (so I am told) spin doctors and the Westminster lobby specialists: all have benefited from this £66 billion extravaganza. Cedric Brown, British Gas's chief executive, was hung out to dry on the back of a £475,000 salary: small change compared to 1995's rewards for a multitude of partners in velvet claret land. Wise management will replenish reserves but the majority will create confetti in the shape of overblown salaries, bonuses and dividends.

Three deals make up more than £18 billion of the grand total, namely Glaxo's £9 billion bid for Wellcome, Lloyds Bank's near £6 billion purchase of the TSB and Granada's £3.2 billion Forte foray. More and more, particularly in the case of contested takeovers, US and European investment banks find themselves thrown, for want of a better word, together. By a strange twist of fate, Warburg and Morgan Stanley have at last joined forces: as advisers to Forte. Enter, also, JP Morgan.

Then again, 1995 was the year when predators, not only in the UK but up and down the US, found the cashflows of the Recs irresistible.

Irresistible *before* Stephen Littlechild, the Director-General of Offer, reviewed his distribution review: irresistible *afterwards*. Within a space of weeks, almost the entire sector, lovingly crafted by the professor to facilitate competition — direct and by bench-mark comparison — had received the free market treatment.

Littlechild's pleas for referrals to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission fell on deaf ears at the Department of Trade and Industry, other than when the Gencos came out to play in their own backyard. Over at Carey Street, home of the MMC, National Power, which bid £2.7 billion for Southern Electric, and PowerGen, which offered £1.9 billion for Midlands, will spend much of the festive season arguing that vertical integration — anathema to Professor Littlechild — is OK. Scottish Power, which acquired ManWeb for £1 billion, would do well to keep shtum. The Celts opted for a bit of vertical, so to speak, and got away with it.

The deal cutters, impeccably attired at this stage of the UK money game, argue that not a little of 1995's takeover activity reflected industry's preference to run the OFT/DTI/MMC gauntlet under a Conservative government. Such thinking, it is argued (most forcibly by those with a vested interest), augurs well for the first quarter of 1996 and possibly beyond.

So what, you may wonder, do urchins hear beneath the havana clouds? Not, alas, a constant stream of precise inside information; more a case of speculation as to plausible developments in respect of matters already in the public domain.

What role will the Pru play, for instance, in the reshaping of the insurance sector, inevitable after the fall-out that greeted the industry's appalling mis-selling of personal pensions accompanied by rip-off commission rates? The recent speculative flurry in the shares of Legal & General is but a straw in the wind.

Bankgesellschaft Berlin, the state-owned German bank, is current favourite to acquire fund managers Gartmore. Will this £560 million auction signal the long-anticipated bid for Mercury Asset Management, possibly from the NatWest, which has finally divested NatWest Bancorp for $3.5 billion? Speculators in the Woolwich, gambling on incorporation, should be rewarded in the new year but who knows what fate holds in store for the Alliance & Leicester, the society that raised its drawbridge as investors attempted to open accounts. But it was Cazenove, having toyed with a sell-out to Barings, that enjoyed the luckiest escape of 1995.

Consolidation of the pharmaceutical sector is not over. Will Zeneca bow out of 1996 as an independent company? Zeneca may look vulnerable but hardly as vulnerable as Cable & Wireless whose directors, incapable of choosing between Lord Young, the chairman, and James Ross, the chief executive, shot both. Mercury's success has underwhelmed and Don Cruickshank, Director-General of Oftel, has taken a leaf out of Clare Spottiswoode's book and appears intent on destroying BT, or, as he puts it, do away with "anti-competitive behaviour". Another joker in the equity pack.

A mere rumour, but word has it that Morrisons, the supermarket enterprise, might attract Sainsbury's interest.

Time for festivities. Enjoy.

BOXING DAY TIMES

THE National Grid is poised in Wokingham for the *moment* late on Christmas evening when the credits roll on Victor Meldrew in *One Foot in the Grave*. A button will be pressed that will release thousands of gallons of water down the side of a Welsh mountain to help power all the extra kettles that are switched on.

THE Cost of "Living Really Well" is rising more rapidly than the common man's outgoings in these days of low inflation, says Anthony Harris.

PINTS and postal orders can both be bought over the counter at The Anchor public house in Gunthorpe, near Nottingham, while in Lincolnshire a post office operates from the front room of an ordinary house. They both represent small communities fighting to save their post offices from closure.

Industry builds up level of stocks at faster pace

By Janet Bush, economics correspondent

BRITISH industry continued to build up stocks at an even greater pace in the third quarter than in the second, according to the latest figures from the Central Statistical Office.

The CSO said that stocks in the production and distribution industries had grown by a seasonally adjusted £1.2 billion. This followed an increase of £746 million in the second quarter.

Of the total, manufacturers built up stocks by £769 million in the third quarter.

Wholesalers' stocks rose by £237 million, a much larger increase than the £40 million seen in the second quarter, while retailers saw their stock levels rise by £221 million, smaller than the £285 million increase in the previous quarter.

This build up of stocks is the single factor most worrying City economists. In the third quarter, virtually all of the 0.4 per cent of growth in gross domestic product was accounted for by this accumulation. The converse of this is that, as companies destock, this will have a negative impact on GDP.

Goldman Sachs, the US securities house, believes that this process will limit GDP growth in both the final quarter of this year and the first quarter of 1996 to only 0.1 per cent, with GDP subsequently rising to 0.4 per cent in the second quarter as this process comes to an end.

Goldman is predicting only 1.7 per cent growth in GDP for 1996 as a whole. This figure is considerably lower than the Government's Budget forecast of 3 per cent.

Other figures released by the CSO yesterday showed that capital spending by manufacturing industry was 2 per cent higher in the third quarter than in the second quarter and 12 per cent up on the same period a year ago.

Within the third quarter total, new building work was virtually the same as in the second quarter, there was a 2 per cent increase in investment in vehicles and a 15 per cent rise in spending on plant and machinery.

Barclays sells French loans

BARCLAYS has found a buyer for part of its troubled French property loan portfolio (Patricia Tehan writes).

It is selling loans with a gross book value of £114 million to an investor consortium of Lehman Brothers, the US bank, Cargill Financial Services and La Salle Partners. The sale is due to be completed early next year.

The bank said it will manage down the rest of the portfolio, whose gross book value is £92 million, most of it short-term performing debts and other property finance whose structure makes them more difficult to sell.

The portfolio to be sold includes 193 property loans for office and housing developments and properties located in and around Paris.

Barclays said the assets will be managed by Lafayette Partenaires, a joint venture between La Salle and Société Générale.

Barclays reported a £203 million first-half loss on restructuring its French operations, part of which related to the poor-performing property portfolio. The move was part of a restructuring of its French operations, after a decision to concentrate on retail banking. Its total property portfolio is 64 per cent covered by provisions.

The bank said the portfolio it intends to keep is provisioned at a higher level.

CSW claims 74% control of Seeboard

CENTRAL and South West Corporation, the American utility, is near to full control of Seeboard, the southeast electricity company (Christine Buckley writes).

CSW said yesterday it owned, or had acceptances for, 74 per cent of Seeboard's shares. The company moved on Seeboard last month in an agreed bid, valuing Seeboard at £1.6 billion. The offer was extended for nearly three weeks. CSW is offering £6.35p a share, 61 per cent above the price after Seeboard's full-year results. The offer is now open until January 11.

BNFL takes next chief from Exxon

By Ross Tieman, industrial correspondent

BNFL has hired a new chief executive from Exxon Chemical Europe to head operations of the state nuclear fuel group as output of its new Thorp reprocessing plant gathers pace.

John Taylor, the 48-year-old chief of Exxon's billion-dollar Polyolefins business, will take over at BNFL's headquarters at Risley, Warrington, in March. A chemistry graduate of Swansea University, he is to succeed Neville Chamberlain, who becomes full-time deputy chairman and has a brief to develop the company's international business. John Guinness remains full-time chairman.

Mr Taylor said that he was delighted to be joining a company "at the forefront of the world's nuclear industry". He said: "The challenge is to move the company forward by building upon the achievements of my predecessor."

Mr Guinness said that Mr Taylor's international experience would help BNFL "in the next phase of its development into a truly world-class company".

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.17	2.01
Austria Sch	16.65	15.15
Belgium Fr	48.70	44.40
Canada $	2.207	2.047
Cyprus Cyp£	0.746	0.691
Denmark Kr	9.23	8.43
Finland Mkk	7.29	6.64
France Fr	8.04	7.39
Germany Dm	2.38	2.17
Greece Dr	388.00	363.00
Hong Kong $	12.55	11.55
Ireland Pt	1.02	0.94
Israel Shk	5.3000	4.6500
Italy Lira	2554.00	2399.00
Japan Yen	171.90	155.90
Malta	0.592	0.537
Netherlds Gld	2.644	2.414
New Zealand $	2.50	2.28
Norway Kr	10.41	9.61
Portugal Esc	243.50	225.00
S Africa Rd	ref.	5.39
Spain Pta	195.50	182.50
Sweden Kr	10.87	10.07
Switzerland Fr	1.93	1.75
Turkey Lira	refer	64435.0
USA $	1.637	1.507

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The winners and losers of 1995

Who made the most money in 1995? And who lost the most? Which shares rose highest? And which suffered the worst falls? Tomorrow. The Sunday Times reveals the successes and failures in British business during 1995: the individuals, the companies, the takeovers.

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A WORKING WEEK FOR: GAVIN BREWER

Following the Pied Piper of Hamleys

'Twas the week before Christmas and as the hordes converged on the best-known toy shop, **Jon Ashworth** talked to its manager

ANDRÉ CAMARA

Bear essentials: Gavin Brewer with some of the teddies and other soft toys at Hamleys. "It's a living theatre. Everyone is performing," he says

CHRISTMAS at Hamleys. Crowds surge through the doors of the world's most famous toy shop and fight their way up the escalators. Bubba loo birds dance in the foyer. as magnetic bugs tumble down the wall. A well-dressed woman pushes a baby in a pram, while her husband wanders behind, muttering into his mobile phone. Two days to Christmas, and a football-capacity crowd will pass through these doors.

Every Christmas, staff at Hamleys run a sweepstake, betting on which day will be the busiest. It is a tough call. Gavin Brewer, store manager for the past five years, has yet to succeed. "It's usually the secretary who wins," he sighs, guiding me past model helicopters and radio-controlled cars. "I've never won it."

Since Monday, more than 150,000 shoppers will have visited Hamleys, filling their bags with everything from Lego bricks to flying fairies. Top sellers this Christmas include Barbie and Power Rangers — among more than 35,000 toys, games and gifts spread over seven floors. Action Man is as popular as ever. "I always refer to Hamleys as a living theatre," says Brewer, as the store's resident magician whips some coins out of a cup. "Everyone is performing." He joined the Regent Street store 21 years ago, and has his share of tales. "Over the years, I've seen many people. King Husain of Jordan used to shop here quite a lot. Demi Moore... She was fun, she was very nice." He adopts a showbiz pose: "I'm Demi Moore, I'm great, you guys want to take a picture of me buying lots in Hamleys?" I picture Bruce Willis running amok in the soft toy department. "No," says Brewer, shaking his head. "He was opening Planet Hollywood at the time." So much for *Die Hard IV*...

Brewer recalls the time Baroness Thatcher dropped in. "She bought a fire engine for her grandson," he says. "It was the day after Windsor Castle burnt down." He took her down to the basement in search of Santa. It was the first Christmas without the famous Hamleys grotto, and Brewer was deeply apologetic. "She leant forward, and she looked at me straight in the eye, and said (lowering his voice to a husky whisper): 'Quite right. Every single square foot, especially at this time of year, should be taken up for *selling*.'"

Michael Jackson called in during his last British tour. "I remember he bought quite a lot of magic. And he bought quite a lot of Britain's animals, and knights, and soldiers. It didn't come to a lot, but there was a helluva lot of them." I ask whether Bubbles, the pet chimpanzee, accompanied him. "No, no, we wouldn't allow that," says Brewer, horrified. "But his advisers bought a whole lot of soft toys to decorate his suite at the Dorchester, including chimps."

Brewer is unlikely to forget the saga of Axl Rose, lead singer with Guns 'n' Roses. An American telephoned to arrange a VIP visit. "The conversation got weirder and weirder," says Brewer. "He said, would you close the store? I said, yes, in fact we've already done it. And he said, he doesn't like speaking English. Can you make sure that you've only got Spanish-speaking sales assistants? Then he says, do you mind if he brings in his pet tiger? I said, no, look, sorry..."

The whole thing turned out to be a practical joke. "It was a total wind-up by some pop magazine, and they were phoning up different establishments — a pub, Harrods — and asking these same basic questions, and taping the response. I acquitted myself reasonably well. I think Harrods laid on the Green Room."

I question who would buy the large, stuffed animals — pointing to an enormous giraffe on a shelf. Brewer launches into a tale about a lovelorn suitor, who was desperate for his girlfriend to move in with him. He filled her flat with stuffed animals, but the strategy failed miserably. "She finally realised he was a bit of a prat and dumped him. He tried to bring them back for a refund." I ask whether Brewer obliged, and receive one of those "Do you think I'm stupid?" looks.

Then there was the time an American swaggered in, claiming he had just had tea with the Princess of Wales, and pointing excitedly at a family of life-size moose. He reached for his wallet and drawled: "I want Mother moose, Father moose, and Baby moose. I'm building the biggest ski lodge in America, in the Rockies near Salt Lake City, and have real moose on the front lawn. I want to put these ones inside to scare them away." He handed over £12,000, and the moose were never heard of again.

> The man handed over £12,000 and the moose were never heard of again

Christmas week pushes Hamleys to the limit. The tills take more than £250,000 a day, sometimes topping £300,000 on the busiest day. Change is shipped in by the truckload. Today, 30,000 to 40,000 people are likely to pass through the front doors. "You go to a football match," says Brewer, gesturing wearily around at the baying mob. "All of those people would actually visit Hamleys in any one day."

Soon after the store closes at 9pm, four or five articulated lorries arrive from the Hamleys warehouse in Saffron Walden, Essex, and begin unloading thousands of items. A 15-strong team works through the night, sweeping floors, and packing shelves. "Once, there was a guy who disappeared in the night," says Brewer. "He crawled underneath a table. I think he was history after that."

Doors open at 9am. During Christmas week, about 150 people will be working in the store at any one time, many of them actors. "They like to call themselves resting actors, but they're actually out of work," says Brewer. "And they're seriously out of work at this time of year because it's pantomime season." The Christmas crush brings its problems. People faint. Children scream and shout. The absence of the grotto remains contentious. "It ends up being a big customer complaint," says Brewer, unrepentant. "Say you have 30,000 people coming in to Hamleys, and 5,000 of those want to see Santa, it's not possible. I always say, well, the whole shop is a grotto." He is cornered by a woman who complains that Santa is nowhere to be found. Brewer sends someone to look for him. "He's probably having a tea break," he whispers.

Brewer was born in England, but moved to South Africa with his parents when he was a baby. His father was one of South Africa's first trout farmers, and has a farm in the Eastern Transvaal. Regular visitors at the farm include Julian Ogilvie Thompson, chairman of Anglo American.

Brewer returned to the UK as a 19-year-old, and ended up doing a retail management diploma course in Torquay, before moving to London one bleak October. "Hamleys was advertising for Christmas staff," he recalls. "My ambition was to go to Afghanistan with the rest of my friends. I stayed." He rose through the ranks, becoming store manager in 1990. He was educated in Swaziland, at Waterford; at the time the only multi-racial school in the southern hemisphere. The actor Richard E. Grant went there; as did Nelson Mandela's daughters. His fellow pupils included Matthew Parris, the MP-turned-sketchwriter for *The Times*. Brewer recalls a night around the campfire during a school expedition to Mount Kilimanjaro. "Matthew went off by himself to sleep under the stars. In the middle of the night, we heard this terrible scream. Matthew came running back in shouting: 'A lion licked my face! A lion licked my face!' It turned out to be the local dog."

Years on, Brewer has become the typical British commuter. Every morning, he leaves his home in Redhill, Surrey, and catches the 8.10 to London Victoria. Arriving in Regent Street, he walks through the store, looking for blocked fire exits, and overcrowded shelves, then retreats to the staff canteen for his morning cup of coffee.

In the evening, he crosses the road to the Blue Post for a pint of beer with Stephen Woodbridge, managing director of Hamleys. He returns to Victoria to catch the 7.02, the fast train, and is home in time to spend 20 minutes with his two-year-old daughter, Jessie, before she goes to bed. "She prefers Daddy's toy shop," he says. "She sometimes comes up on Sunday." Jessie's favourite toy is Pingu, the penguin, and her room is overflowing with soft toys. "She knows the name of every one."

Hamleys is open tomorrow, from 10am to 4pm, and Brewer will be roaming the floors as usual. He offers to autograph copies of this article — an offer he may live to regret. The store will then be abandoned until Wednesday, when children will be queueing at the door, eager to spend their Christmas money. "It doesn't actually get quiet until the kids go back to school," says Brewer. "Then we start planning for the next Christmas."

HIDDEN ASSETS

Looking heavenward to a high point of office life

Joanna Pitman uncovers a jewel among ceilings at the home of The Crown Estate

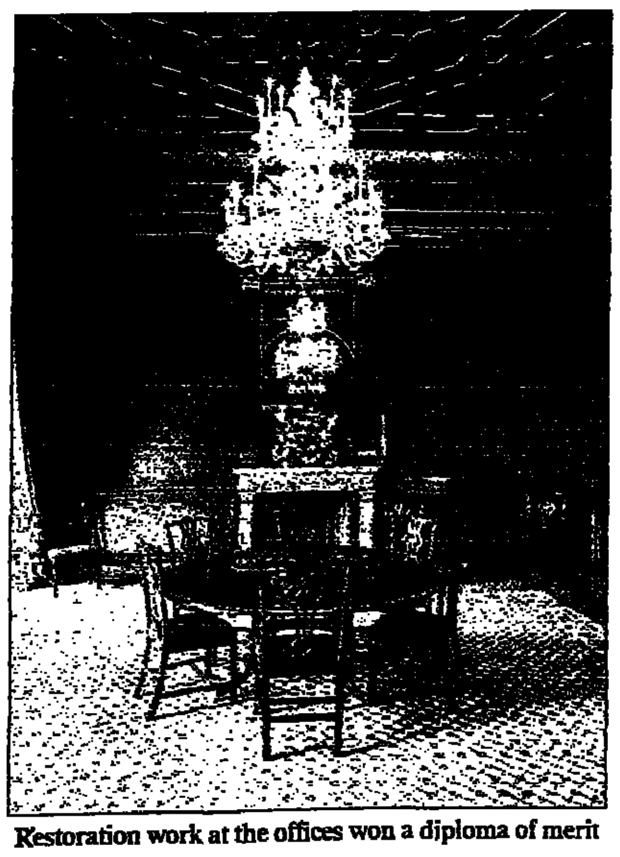
Gaze up at the ceiling for inspiration and in most offices you will see an unlovely muddle of striplighting, fire extinguishers and security installations. Not so at the offices of The Crown Estate in Carlton House Terrace, SW1. There, your eye will be drawn to the glorious work of Owen Jones, the designer and decorator best known for the interiors at Crystal Palace and for his bible of design principles, *The Grammar of Ornament*.

These ceilings are exquisite. It is a wonder that the staff working beneath them can concentrate on their computer screens. The rich, warm colours, the gold leaf and the fine inlaid wood details combine in a distinctive Islamic style that derives from the Alhambra Palace in Granada.

The buildings occupied by The Crown Estate, Nos 13 to 16, were built to John Nash's design in 1828 on the site of the gardens of the Prince Regent's Carlton House. All Grade 1 listed, the buildings sit in an appropriate location for the body responsible for managing the sovereign estates and directing their revenues to the Exchequer as part of the arrangement for the provision of the Civil List.

Notable residents in Nos 13 to 16 have included William Gladstone and the 5th Earl of Lonsdale, the sporting earl immortalised in boxing's Lonsdale Belt. In 1863 Sir Samuel Peto, an industrialist and entrepreneur, bought No 16 and commissioned Owen Jones to redecorate the ground and first floors. He sold the 23-bedroom house three years later to the antiquarian Alfred Morrison, who lived in it for 28 years before selling the lease for £30,000 to Viscount Cowdray. Vast sums were spent on improvements and the installation of electricity but his widow was only able to get £800 for the unexpired 13-year lease in 1934.

The house was bought by Sir Charles Burney, who turned it into Crockfords Club, a gambling den that was later frequented by Lord Lucan. By this time, false ceilings had been installed, obscuring some of the Owen Jones decorative work, and new lighting had marred the effect of many of his designs. When the building was bought with Nos 13 to 15 by The Crown Estate in 1987, restoration and refurbishment, which linked the four buildings, began.



Restoration work at the offices won a diploma of merit

The restoration of the original colour schemes was achieved through scrapes, paint analysis and painstaking research by the architect, Hunter and Partners, and with advice from English Heritage and the Victoria and Albert Museum. The project won a Europa Nostra diploma of merit in 1991 for its contribution to the preservation of European heritage.

It is not easy for a town house of notable 1860s interiors to be preserved in its original form and still be used as a modern office in the 1990s. The Crown Estate has been forced to adapt some rooms to more mundane use: a boardroom, reception room and waiting room, for example. One of the ground-floor rooms, formerly a gracious reception room, which looks out on to The Mall, is now fitted out with room dividers amid the piles of papers, files and family photos, and the humming and eerie green glowings of a hundred computer screens.

The Crown Estate has spent a large sum on its successful refurbishment and adaptation to modern office use. The results are open to the public for one day a year in September as part of the Civic Trust open-day scheme. Last year 1,100 people trooped in to be rewarded with a prime Owen Jones interior in immaculate condition. If you cannot wait, try standing on the pavement in Carlton House Terrace and looking up into No 16. Best viewed on a dark, wintry afternoon.

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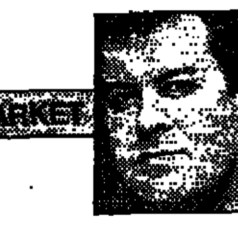


PHILIP PANGALOS

Last-minute Christmas buying boosts index

THE London market continued in festive mood. Investors seeking last-minute Christmas buys combined with a premium in the futures market to push the FT-SE 100 closer to the 3,700 level by the year end.

Trading conditions were thin, but those dealers who ventured into the City for the last half-day session before Christmas were in buoyant mood as stocks remained in positive territory and were squeezed higher. Senior traders reported an absence of sellers in spite of the volatile conditions earlier in the week, with most confident that the FT-SE 100 index will break through 3,700 between now and the new year.

The mood was positive from the start after a 37-point overnight advance on Wall Street, firmer gilts and a sharp rise in the March futures contract, which is used by investors to hedge against price changes on the main index.

The London market was not affected by sentiment across the Atlantic as the half-day session closed before Wall Street had opened.

The FT-SE 100 index ended near its best of the day, closing up 25 points at 3,658.3, giving a 15.7-point gain on the week in spite of volatile conditions after the 101-point tumble by the Dow Jones industrial average on Monday.

Second-liners were also buoyant, with the FT-SE 250 gaining 18.1 to 3,985.4, giving a rise of 25.6 points on the week. Volume reached only 392.8 million shares.

Geest, the fresh fruit and prepared foods group best known for bananas, jumped 39p to 192p, as 4.3 million shares changed hands. They were in demand as dealers responded favourably to the sale of the group's banana division to a joint venture between the Windward Islands Development Company and **Fyffes** for £147.5 million. The terms are much higher than original market expectations. Geest, which has been hit by a slump in banana prices, plans to concentrate on boosting its profitable fresh and convenience foods businesses. Fyffes was unchanged at 108p.

British Land firmed 1p to 370p on news that it has acquired the remaining 50 per cent of Broadgate Properties from the receivers of Rosehaugh for £121.5 million and is in "advanced negotiations" over the refinancing of some £800 million of debt associated with its purchase of the Broadgate development. British Land acquired its original interest in the City office development on taking over Stanhope Properties this year.

Elsewhere in the sector, **Raglan Properties** firmed 2½p to 20p on news that it is seeking revised authority to purchase its own shares.

PowerGen stood out in a brighter electricity sector, adding 10p to 534p and making the power generator one of the top-performing blue chip stocks as traders speculated that the group may follow its larger rival, National Power, and institute a share repurchase scheme.

On the bid front, **Gartmore** eased ½p to 274½p with the market awaiting bid developments. Bankgesellschaft Berlin, the German bank, is seen as the front-runner to buy the fund management group next month in a deal expected to be worth £560 million.

Royal Bank of Scotland stood out in a firmer banks sector with a 5p rise to 573p as bid speculation continued to underpin the shares.

However, **Vaux Group**, the brewer and Swallow Hotels and nursing homes operator which is the subject of intense bid speculation, retreated 5p to 270p after the resignation of the Sunderland group's finance director and the absence of a bid. **Bass**, which is the favourite to launch a takeover offer, advanced 18p to 703p, while **Wolverhampton & Dudley** added 5p to 587p and **Whitbread** rose 4p to 664p. Bid speculation saw **Ladbroke** add 4p to 152p.

British Gas encountered some profit-taking after its recent rally. The shares, which have been buoyed by the cold spell, a high gas price in America and revived speculation about a possible bid from **Shell** or **BP**, eased 1½p to 256p, on volume of 9.72 million shares. Shell rose 3p to 855p and BP 2p to 535p.

Medeva rose 8p to 275p on news that the drugs group has teamed up with with Janssen Pharmaceutica International, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, the US pharmaceutical and healthcare giant, to co-develop and distribute Medeva's hepatitis B vaccine in the Asia Pacific region, excluding Japan.

Transport Development celebrated the appointment of Merrill Lynch as its sole corporate broker, replacing Panmure Gordon, with a 5p rise to 183p.

Elsewhere, **British Biotech** continued to reflect the prospects for the company's new cancer treatment with a jump of 43p to £17.93.

NFC was also in demand, firming 2p to 138p, after news that the group had withdrawn from negotiations concerning the proposed acquisition of the freight forwarding interests of Lep Group, the debt-laden transport group. NFC said it had not proved possible to conclude an agreement to the satisfaction of both parties.

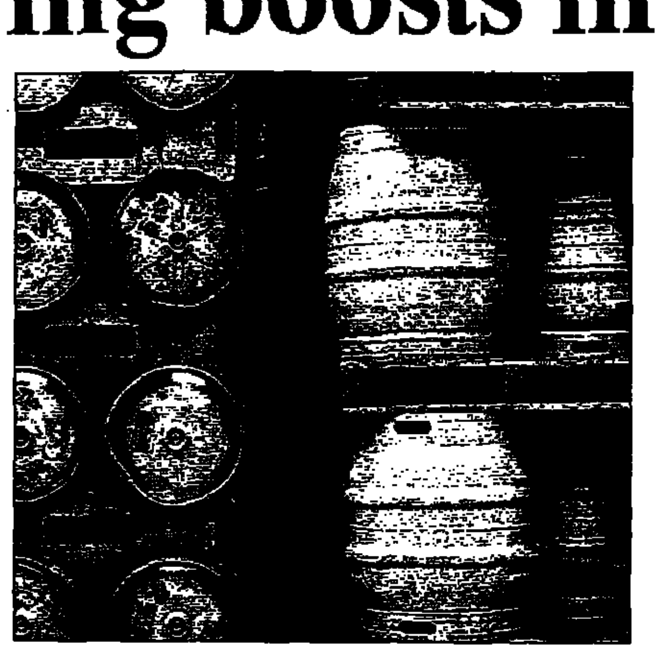
Since the collapse of the talks Lep has applied to have its shares, which were suspended at 3p in June, cancelled from the official list from December 29.

☐ **GILT-EDGED**: The market opened higher on the back of overnight gains for US Treasuries. However, trading during the shortened half-day session was quiet in thin conditions before the long Christmas weekend break, with most dealers expecting quiet conditions next week too.

The March series of the long gilt future ended eight ticks higher at £109$^{29}/_{32}$, on extremely modest volume of 7,500 contracts traded.

Among conventional stock, five-year issues climbed by about £$^{1}/_{16}$, while gains for longer-dated stocks extended to £⅜. Index-linked issues rose by about £$^{3}/_{16}$.

☐ **WALL STREET**: Shares rallied in late morning trading, buoyed by bonds. The Dow Jones industrial average had added 18.06 points to stand at 5,114.59 at lunchtime.



Traders are expecting a fresh bid in the brewing sector

AIM-listed shares in Electrophoretics International, the medical diagnostic research group, jumped 20p to 172p after its exclusive collaborative agreement with the Central Veterinary Laboratory to do research to identify protein markers that could be used for the diagnosis of BSE, the so-called mad cow disease.

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

	Current price	Week's change	
Mid Kent Holding	430p	+77p	French companies plan bid
Stagecoach	330p	+48p	Wins rail franchise
Vaux Group	270p	+21p	Bid speculation
Ennemix	34p	+14p	Redland may bid
British Gas	256p	+26½p	Speculative support
Anagen	74p	+14p	FDA clears new assay
McDonnell Info Sys	36p	-28p	New warning hits shares
Courtaulds Textiles	338p	-29p	Profits warning/broker downgrades
W Canning	212p	-18p	Profits warning

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	5114.59 (+18.06)
S&P Composite	612.82 (+2.33)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	19744.42 (+91.17)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	9932.20 (+24.59)
Amsterdam:	
EOE Index	481.52 (+1.16)
Sydney:	
AO	2206.80 (+3.00)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	2280.43 (+15.36)
Singapore:	
Straits	2275.39 (+28.58)
Brussels:	
General	8319.01 (+22.38)
Paris:	
CAC-40	1873.37 (+38.99)
Zurich:	
SKA Gen	709.90 (+7.30)
London:	
FT 30	2660.5 (+18.7)
FT 100	3658.3 (+25.0)
FT-SE Mid 250	3985.4 (+18.1)
FT-SE-A 350	1815.1 (+11.6)
FT-SE Eurotrack 100	1479.19 (+13.62)
FT A All-Share	1787.69 (+10.78)
FT Non Financials	1889.08 (+11.35)
FT Fixed Interest	114.23 (-0.11)
FT Govt Secs	95.42 (+0.04)
Bargains	13795
SEAQ Volume	383.8m
USM (Datastrm)	187.87 (+0.99)
US$	1.5415 (+0.0024)
German Mark	2.2202 (+0.0034)
Exchange Index	83.0 (+0.2)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
£:ECU	1.1805
£:SDR	1.0367
RPI	149.8 Nov (3.1%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	149.8 Nov (2.9%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Cash Converters Intl	24	...
Century Inns	117	...
Com de Part Fin	510	...
Cortworth (150)	151	...
Cox Insurance	110	...
Crown Products	53	...
Dmatek	81	...
East Surrey NV	448	...
Finsb Tech Tst (100)	102	...
Gardner (L)	132	- 1
Gearhouse Gp (200)	199	- 3
Jasmin	83	...
Manx & O'seas	25	+ 1
National Grid (204)	199	...
Northern Petroleum	75	...
Nthn Petlm	8	...
Pet City	380	...
Polymasc Pharms	125	- 2
Revelation Plcc	100	...
Rushmere Wynne	3½	...
Trocadero	46	- 1
Unicorn Intl (133)	134	...
Victrex	244	+ 4
Viewinn	130	...
Wilmington	66	...

RIGHTS ISSUES

Dnloe Hse n/p (1r10p)	1½	...
Melrose n/p (34)	6	...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:	
Geest	192p (+39p)
Gibbon	192p (+19p)
Tibbet & Britten	395p (+30p)
Shield Diag	173p (+10p)
Headlam	217p (+12p)
Hardys & Hansons	296p (+10p)
Danka Bus Systems	543p (+17p)
FALLS:	
Admiral	828p (-5p)
ICI	750p (-6p)
Vaux Group	270p (-5p)
Burn Stewart	132p (-5p)
Exco	98½p (-5½p)

Closing Prices Page 31

TEMPUS

Busy new year brewing

SMALL independent brewers have had a lot in common with rabbits over the past year. There they were ambling along in cute rustic fashion with an armful of quaint-sounding brands and decades of tradition. Then, suddenly, a flash of light ... and with a startled expression they realised that they had strayed on to a busy road and right into the headlights shining from the front of an approaching truck. A fleet of juggernauts driven by the big brewing giants was heading straight for them.

This week, Vaux, the regional brewer based in Sunderland, kept bubbling the takeover talk that has circled the sector for most of the year.

Vaux's share price has risen markedly over the past few days and an array of candidates are being vaunted as potential suitors. Vaux, however, is no stranger to takeover speculation, but has yet to attract a bid. Bass, Whitbread and Wolverhampton & Dudley are tipped as worth watching as the brewing industry falls over itself looking for growth in a market subdued by the continued flatness of consumer spending.

The independents, such as Greene King, of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, which three years ago tried to woo Morland, based in Oxfordshire, and has since been rebuffing talk of itself as a target, often boast a strong stable of premium brands. It is these brands that have stood out as one of the best profit-spinners.

After the acquisition of Courage by Scottish & Newcastle, the race has been on for consolidation. Large brewers have a fair amount of cash to splash around and small counterparts would appear to be regarded as fair game.

The forecasts are for better fortunes in brewing next year. The expectation has to be that the jockeying for position will intensify, ahead of an upturn in the fortunes of the drinks industry.

Property

PROPERTY shares have been a rotten investment this year, and, indeed, the year before. Had you put £100 into the FT property index at the end of 1993, you would be left with only £77 today. The long downward drift contrasts with the spectacular performance of the sector in 1993, when commercial property was the best-performing sector of the stock market.

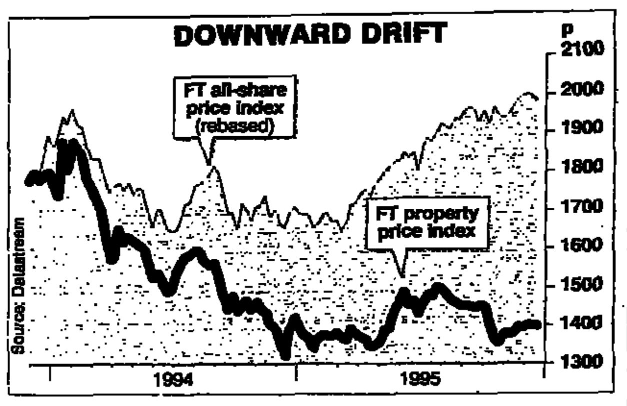
The three-year property share rollercoaster has much to do with expectations of growth unfulfilled. As property companies emerged from recession in 1993, declining gilt yields encouraged investors in real estate. The falling cost of long-term money let the purchaser of a property buy at a yield of more than 9 per cent and finance the deal at 8 per cent. Foreign, principally German, investors rushed to buy and drove yields down on prime City properties.

The influx of foreign capital was a godsend to property companies, faced with high debt and huge vacancy rates. Many raised new equity in the market on the back of rising values and the hope that rents would begin to increase after a long decline.

We are still waiting. The retail warehouse sector has enjoyed some good rental growth, fuelled by the emergence of discount retailers and restrictive planning controls, but office and industrial rents are still sluggish. The leading property companies still own many buildings where rents are well above the market rate. For Land Securities and MEPC investors, dividend increases may still be two years away.

Currently, the outlook is slightly better, with a recent decline in bond yields anticipating another cut in interest rates. However, the prospect of falling rates is less likely to spark a rerating than signs that the Chancellor's 3 per cent growth target is really to be achieved. Investors were taken in once by a play on yields. Next year the focus will be on rents, the engine that drives the property sector.

DOWNWARD DRIFT



Gaming

THE gaming industry has spent most of 1995 moaning that the Government has stacked the odds against it. No doubt the National Lottery, launched in a blaze of publicity just over a year ago, has diverted money that consumers would have gambled elsewhere. But the National Lottery has not been responsible for all the gaming sector's ills. The long hot summer hit consumer spending and too many favourites appear to have romped home on bone dry race courses around the country.

But while a number of smaller players in the sector, such as Gus Carter, the bookie, and Varadon, the bingo operator, have issued profits warnings this year, the overall performance has been pedestrian rather than traumatic.

There is good reason to believe that the odds are swinging back towards the bookmakers' favour next year. The National Lottery effect has now largely been factored into the sector's share prices.

While the National Lottery has a few more tricks up its sleeve, growth will be relatively modest in comparison to this year. Chances have to be that the notorious British weather next summer will not hit the heights of this year, sending people back into the bingo and making sure that favourites get bogged down before they reach the winning post. The industry has also won a number of concessions from the Government, including a cut in pools and betting levies and the right to install fruit machines in betting shops, all of which will help. Consumer spending is forecast to increase and next summer there is a powerful sporting line-up, including the European Football Championship in June, which should generate good business. There is also the chance that at least one company in the sector — Ladbroke and Gus Carter have been the recent tips — will fall prey to a takeover bid. The gaming industry is looking once more like a fair gamble next year.

COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

COCOA

Dec	879-865	Mar	997-996
Mar	907-906	May	1006-1005
May	929-928	Jul	unq
Jul	947-946	Sep	--
Sep	967-966		
Dec	986-984	Volume: 2505	

ROBUSTA COFFEE ($)

Jan	2035-2025	Sep	1612-1610
Mar	1790-1789	Nov	1610-1600
May	1688-1687	Jan	1590-1570
Jul	1635-1630	Volume: 1968	

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

Reuters		Oct	304.9-03.5
Spot: 369.0		Dec	299.9-98.5
Mar	348.4-48.0	Mar	298.9-96.5
May	337.8-36.7	May	299.9-95.6
Aug	328.7-27.6	Volume: 308	

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average fatstock prices at representative markets on December 21

(p/kg lw)	Pig	Sheep	Cattle
GB:	111.11	122.11	123.93
(+/-)	-5.15	+6.75	+2.66
Eng/Wales:	111.16	123.43	122.60
(+/-)	-5.28	+7.46	+2.28
(%)	-71.0	-53.0	-23.0
Scotland:	107.64	116.67	127.72
(+/-)	+7.33	+4.57	+2.34
(%)	-65.0	-39.0	+21.0

ICIS-LOR (London 8.30pm 21/12/95)

CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	18.30	+0.30
Brent 15 day (Feb)	17.80	-0.05
Brent 15 day (Mar)	17.40	(n/c)
W Texas Intermediate (Feb)	18.95	(n/c)
W Texas Intermediate (Mar)	18.60	(n/c)

PRODUCTS ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

Premium Gas .15	B: 170 (-6)	O: 172 (-6)
Gasoil EEC	178 (n/c)	181 (n/c)
Non EEC 1H Jan	176 (n/c)	178 (n/c)
Non EEC 1H Feb	174 (+1)	176 (+1)
3.5 Fuel Oil	103 (+3)	105 (+2)
Naphtha	159 (-1)	161 (-1)

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)

GAS OIL

Jan	172.50-72.75	Apr	159.25-59.75
Feb	169.00-69.25	May	156.50-57.00
Mar	164.25-64.50	Vol: 6201	

BRENT (6.00pm)

Feb	17.81-17.82	May	16.84-16.86
Mar	17.38-17.39	Jun	16.63-16.66
Apr	17.10 SLR	Vol: 9509	

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

WHEAT (close £/t)		BARLEY (close £/t)	
Jan	123.65	Jan	114.50
Mar	125.80	Mar	116.75
May	127.50	May	118.75
Jul	129.85	Sep	109.25
Sep	113.00	Nov	111.25
Volume: 403		Volume: 117	

POTATO (£/t)

	Open	Close
Mar	unq	270.0
Apr	237.0	237.5
May	unq	271.0
		Volume: 7

RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cif p/k)

Jan 106.25-106.75

BIFFEX (GNI Ltd $10/pt)

	High	Low	Close
Jan 96	1610	1592	1602
Feb 96	1565	1555	1570
Apr 96	1560	1550	1543
Oct 96	1430	1430	1430
Vol 51 lots			Open interest: 3665

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LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Official) (Volume prev day)			Rudolf Wolff
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	Cash: 2860.0-2862.0	3mth: 2691.0-2692.0	Vol: 2951100
Lead ($/tonne)	725.00-726.00	720.00-721.00	157975
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1011.0-1011.5	1034.0-1035.0	842675
Tin ($/tonne)	6225.0-6235.0	6260.0-6265.0	20805
Aluminium Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1668.0-1669.0	1694.0-1694.5	959525
Nickel ($/tonne)	8070.0-8080.0	8190.0-8195.0	43314

LIFFE OPTIONS

		Calls			Puts		
	Series	Jan	Apr	Jul	Jan	Apr	Jul
Alld Dom	500	17½	34½	41½	5	13½	21½
(*512)	550	0½	12	18½	38½	42½	51
Argyll	330	10	22	27	7	14	21
(*331½)	360	1	9½	14	29	32½	39
ASDA	110	4½	9	13	4	8	9
(*111)	120	1	5	8½	10½	13½	15
Boots	550	30	51	59	2	8½	17
(*582½)	600	5½	21	30	22	30	40½
Br Airways	460	18	32½	41	5½	12	20½
(*471½)	500	2	14	21	30	34	41½
BP	500	37½	45½	53	0½	6½	11½
(*535)	550	4½	16½	24½	18	28	33
Br Steel	140	18	22	25	0	2	5½
(*157)	160	4½	9½	12½	6	9½	15
C & W	420	37	51½	59½	2½	8½	19½
(*454)	460	10½	28	37	15½	24½	31½
CU	600	38	52	59	4	19	24½
(*632½)	650	8½	24½	33½	24½	46	50½
ICI	750	17	32½	44½	14	36½	42
(*750)	800	3	13½	25	51	70½	75
Kingfishr	500	52	64½	68½	1	8	16
(*549½)	550	13½	31½	37½	13	27	36½
Land Sec	600	11	26½	33½	9	17	29½
(*600)	650	0½	7½	12½	50½	51	62
M & S	420	20	32	37½	2½	8	14
(*436)	460	2	11½	17	25	28½	34½
Nat West	650	20	32½	46½	11	34	41
(*656)	700	3½	15	26	45½	67½	72½
Sainsbury	360	22½	33	37	1½	6½	12
(*379½)	390	5	15½	20½	13½	19	26½
Shell	850	15½	33	41½	9½	26½	31½
(*854½)	900	1	11½	20½	46	58½	63
Smkl Bch	650	42½	58	70½	2	12	19
(*687)	700	11	29	42	20	33½	40½
Storehse	330	11	21	28	7	13	18
(*332½)	360	1½	8½	14½	28	31½	35
Trafalgar	20	4	6½	7½	0½	2½	3½
(*23)	25	1½	4½	5½	3	5½	6½
Unilever	1300	22½	50½	65	14	36½	46
(*1307½)	1350	5½	26½	41½	45½	66½	74
Zeneca	1200	48½	81	104½	13½	47	58½
(*1230)	1250	21½	55½	77½	36	72½	83
	Series	Feb	May	Aug	Feb	May	Aug
Grnd Met	420	40	47½	57	6	10	16
(*458½)	460	13½	24	34½	21	27	34½
Ladbroke	140	18	21	26½	5	10	12½
(*151½)	160	8½	12½	18	15	20½	23½
Utd Bisc	240	23½	27½	30½	4	9	12
(*257)	260	11½	16½	20	11½	19	21½

		Calls			Puts		
	Series	Jan	Apr	Jul	Jan	Apr	Jul
BAA	460	29	41½	48½	1½	7	12½
(*485½)	500	5	18½	25½	17½	24	30
Thames W	550	16½	36	43	10	19½	34½
(*554½)	600	1½	15	22	46	50	69½
	Series	Feb	May	Aug	Feb	May	Aug
BAT Ind	550	34	41½	49	9½	23½	32
(*567½)	600	11	18	27	38	53	60½
BTR	300	23	25½	30½	2½	8	10½
(*317½)	330	6	9	16	15½	24½	26
Br Aero	750	54½	69½	89	13	25	34
(*785)	800	24½	43	62½	34	48½	57½
Br Telcm	330	22	29	36	0	7½	15½
(*351)	360	6	14	20½	22	23	30½
Cadbury	500	44	50	59½	6½	18½	23½
(*531½)	550	18½	24½	35	29	44	48
Guinness	460	22½	30½	36½	8½	19	23
(*469)	500	6½	13	19	33	43½	46½
GEC	330	19½	28½	33½	4½	7½	13
(*343)	360	4½	12	17	20	22½	28
Hanson	191	7	—	—	7½	—	—
(*191)	211	1	—	—	23	—	—
LASMO	160	22½	25½	30½	1	3½	6
(*179½)	180	9	13½	19	7	10½	14
Lucas	160	17½	21	24½	1½	4½	6
(*173½)	180	9½	10	14	10	13½	15
Pilkingtn	191	15½	21	25	4	5½	9½
(*201)	210	5½	11	15½	13½	14½	19
Prudential	390	37½	42	49	3½	13	17½
(*419)	420	18½	24	33½	13½	26½	31
Redland	360	36½	45	48	3	10½	13½
(*389½)	390	17	26½	30	13	24	27
R-Royce	180	12	16	20½	4½	9	11
(*186)	200	3½	7	12	16	20½	22½
Tesco	280	20	23½	28	5	10	13
(*293½)	300	8	13	17½	14	20½	23
Vodafone	220	14½	21	26½	9	11½	14½
(*223½)	240	6	12½	17½	20½	23	25
Williams	300	27½	31½	33½	1½	6½	8½
(*322)	330	7	13	16½	12½	21	23

FT-SE INDEX (*3658)

	3550	3600	3650	3700	3750	3800
Calls						
Jan	111½	72½	38½	19	7½	2
Feb	138	100½	70	45½	27½	14½
Mar	155	121½	90½	67½	46½	30½
Apr	166½	135	107	83½	62½	47
Jun	—	167½	—	114	—	72½
Puts						
Jan	11	22½	40	70	109½	155
Feb	26½	39½	59½	86½	120½	162
Mar	43	59	78½	106	136	172½
Apr	65½	84	105½	130½	161	195
Jun	—	107½	—	152	—	211

		Calls			Puts		
	Series	Mar	Jun	Sep	Mar	Jun	Sep
Abby Nat	600	50	60½	67½	17½	26	33½
(*631½)	650	23	35	43½	44	52	59½
Amstrad	200	26	30½	36	5½	8	9½
(*217)	220	15	19½	26	14	16½	18
Barclays	700	63½	71	79½	14	22	29
(*746½)	750	31	42½	52	36	45	52
Blue Circ	330	22½	26½	32½	11½	20½	24
(*335½)	360	9	13	19½	29	38	41½
Br Gas	240	34½	28½	31	6	11	12
(*256)	260	13	17½	20½	14	21	22
Dixons	420	31	41	48	14½	20½	26½
(*430½)	460	14	22½	29½	38	43	48
Forte	300	34	37½	42½	4	6½	7½
(*326)	330	14½	17½	24½	12½	19	19½
Tarmac	100	11	14½	16½	4	6½	9
(*106½)	110	6	9	11½	8½	11½	14
Hillsdwn	160	12	13½	15½	5	9½	12
(*165½)	180	4	6	7	16½	22½	24½
Lonrho	160	21	25½	26½	2	3½	6½
(*178½)	180	8	12	15	9½	11½	15
Sears	100	6	8	9½	3½	6	6½
(*101½)	110	2	4	5½	9½	12	12½
Thrn EMI	1500	75½	111	130½	42	53½	70½
(*1522)	1600	33	64	82½	102	109½	124½
Tomkins	260	20	27	31	7	10	13½
(*273)	280	9½	16	20½	16	19½	23
TSB	390	13½	21	—	23	24½	—
(*397)	420	4	7½	—	41	44	—
	Series	Jan	Apr	Jul	Jan	Apr	Jul
Glaxo Well	890	52	68	87½	4	21½	28½
(*896½)	900	19	41½	58½	18½	43½	51½
HSBC	1000	27	54½	71	22	55½	65½
(*1000)	1050	9	33½	50½	55	86	95
Reuter	550	50	64	74	1	11½	17½
(*597)	600	14	32	44½	14½	31½	38
	Series	Jan	Apr	Jul	Jan	Apr	Jul
Royal Ins	360	27	38	44½	2	16	21
(*383)	390	9	22	30	13½	31½	36½
	Series	Mar	Jun		Mar	Jun	
Fisons	260	7½	7½	—	3½	5	—
(*265)	280	0½	0½	—	16	19	—
	Series	Feb	May		Feb	May	
Eastern Gp	960	25½	35½	—	0½	0½	—
(*972½)	1000	0½	0½	—	34½	33½	—
	Series	Mar	Jun	Sep	Mar	Jun	Sep
Natl Pwr	420	42	53½	58	4	13	16
(*451)	460	17	30	35½	19	30½	34
Scot Pwr	360	15½	24	28½	13½	16½	21½
(*364)	390	5½	11	16	33	35	39½

December 22, 1995 Tot: 10031 Call: 7311 Put: 2720 FT-SE Call: 2587 Put: 1430

*Underlying security price.

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
FT-SE 100 Previous open interest: 64297	Mar 96	3654.0	3676.0	3654.0	3665.0	4330
	Jun 96				3666.0	0
FT-SE 250 Previous open interest: 3315	Mar 96				4010.0	0
	Jun 96					0
Three Month Sterling Previous open interest: 337814	Mar 96	93.78	93.79	93.77	93.78	3870
	Jun 96	93.91	93.93	93.90	93.91	901
	Sep 96	93.93	93.94	93.92	93.93	1108
Three Mth Eurodollar Previous open interest: 0	Mar 96				94.63	0
	Jun 96					0
Three Mth Euro DM Previous open interest: 931537	Mar 96	96.37	96.39	96.37	96.38	5701
	Jun 96	96.45	96.49	96.45	96.47	4153
Long Gilt Previous open interest: 144441	Dec 95	110-06	110-11	110-06	110-10	563
	Mar 96	109-26	109-31	109-25	109-29	7569
Japanese Govmt Bond	Mar 96	120.75	120.77	120.62	120.65	1747
	Jun 96	119.30	119.34	119.23	119.20	285
German Gov Bd Bund Previous open interest: 200407	Mar 96	98.70	98.83	98.70	98.83	12965
	Jun 96				98.16	0
Three month ECU Previous open interest: 17328	Mar 96	94.96	94.97	94.95	94.97	225
	Jun 96	95.06	95.10	95.06	95.10	85
Euro Swiss Franc Previous open interest: 40867	Mar 96	98.20	98.28	98.20	98.26	1772
	Jun 96	98.23	98.30	98.23	98.30	648
Italian Govmt Bond Previous open interest: 51911	Mar 96	106.60	107.30	106.60	107.25	9842
	Jun 96	106.30	106.65	106.30	106.65	100

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 6½ Finance Hse 7

Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 6½ Low 5½ Week fixed: 6⁹⁄₁₆

Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth 6¹¹⁄₃₂ ; 3 mth 6¼ . Sell: 2 mth 6⁵⁄₁₆ ; 3 mth: 6⁷⁄₃₂

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis):	6½-6⁷⁄₁₆	6¹¹⁄₃₂-6⁹⁄₃₂	6⁵⁄₁₆-6¼	6⁷⁄₃₂-6⁵⁄₃₂	
Sterling Money Rates:	6¹¹⁄₁₆-6⁹⁄₁₆	6½-6⁷⁄₁₆	6⅜-6⁵⁄₁₆	6¹¹⁄₃₂-6⁹⁄₃₂	6⁵⁄₁₆-6¼
Interbank:	6¹³⁄₁₆-6¹¹⁄₁₆	6½-6⁷⁄₁₆	6⅜-6⁵⁄₁₆	6¹¹⁄₃₂-6⁹⁄₃₂	6⁹⁄₃₂-6⁷⁄₃₂

Overnight: open 6¾, close 6¾.

Local Authority Deps:	6½	n/a	6⁷⁄₁₆	6¼	6⁷⁄₁₆
Sterling CDs:	6¹⁷⁄₃₂-6¹⁵⁄₃₂	6¹³⁄₃₂-6¹¹⁄₃₂	6¹¹⁄₃₂-6⁹⁄₃₂	6¼-6⅛	6⅛-6¹⁄₁₆
Dollar CDs:	5.68	n/a	5.57	5.45	5.40
Building Society CDs:	6¹⁵⁄₃₂-6¹¹⁄₃₂	6½-6⁷⁄₁₆	6⅜-6⁵⁄₁₆	6¹¹⁄₃₂-6⁹⁄₃₂	6⅛-6⅛

TREASURY BILLS: Applcts: £3,993m allotted: £1,000m: Bids: £98.45% received: 74%: Last week: £98.46% received: 71%: Avge rate: £6.1728% last wk £6.1751%: Next week: £800m.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar:	6-5¾	5¾-5½	5⅝-5½	5⅝-5½	5½-4½
Deutschemark:	4½-4¼	4¹⁄₁₆-3¹⁵⁄₁₆	3⅞-3¾	3¾-3⅝	4½-3½
French Franc:	5½-5	5⅛-5	5⅛-5⅛	5⅝-5½	5½-4½
Swiss Franc:	2½-2	2½-2¼	2⅛-1¹⁵⁄₁₆	1¹⁵⁄₁₆-1¹³⁄₁₆	2-1
Yen:	½-¼	⅝-⁷⁄₁₆	½-⅜	½-⅜	n/a

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open $387.60-387.90 Close: $387.25-387.55 High: $387.70-388.00 Low: $387.00-387.30 AM: $387.20 PM: $n/a

Krugerrand: $386.25-388.25 (£250.75-251.75)

Platinum: $405.65 (£263.05) **Silver:** $5.135 (£3.335) **Palladium:** $129.00 (£83.65)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for Dec 22	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Amsterdam	2.4883-2.4928	2.4895-2.4928	½-⅜pr	1½-1¼pr
Brussels	45.63-45.75	45.65-45.75	13-9pr	33-28pr
Copenhagen	8.6040-8.6290	8.6070-8.6290	1½-1pr	3½-2¾pr
Dublin	0.9658-0.9702	0.9775-0.9702	9-7pr	24-20pr
Frankfurt	2.2221-2.2265	2.2234-2.2265	½-⅜pr	1½-1¼pr
Lisbon	232.21-233.16	232.46-233.16	29-49ds	107-143ds
Madrid	188.08-188.45	188.16-188.45	40-49ds	121-137ds
Milan	2445.60-2451.70	2445.60-2449.60	8-10ds	23-26ds
Montreal	2.1010-2.1042	2.1012-2.1042	0.18-0.10pr	0.32-0.21pr
New York	1.5398-1.5418	1.5398-1.5408	0.12-0.10pr	0.33-0.30pr
Oslo	9.8060-9.8310	9.8150-9.8310	½-¼pr	2½-1½pr
Paris	7.6190-7.6350	7.6190-7.6330	1-½pr	2½-2pr
Stockholm	10.2380-10.2770	10.2540-10.2770	⅛-⅜ds	⅛-⅞ds
Tokyo	157.72-158.12	157.85-158.12	1-¾pr	2½-2½pr
Vienna	15.63-15.66	15.64-15.66	½-¼pr	1-½pr
Zurich	1.7922-1.7960	1.7932-1.7960	½-⅜pr	2-1¾pr

Source: Extel Premium - pr. Discount - ds.

DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.3508-1.3517
Austria	10.16-10.17
Belgium (Com)	29.67-29.64
Canada	1.3643-1.3648
Denmark	5.5837-5.5857
France	4.9477-4.9497
Germany	1.4410-1.4420
Hong Kong	7.7315-7.7345
Ireland	1.5914-1.5934
Italy	1588.00-1590.00
Japan	102.57-102.67
Malaysia	2.5375-2.5385
Netherlands	1.6134-1.6144
Norway	6.3582-6.3602
Portugal	150.72-150.82
Singapore	1.4155-1.4165
Spain	122.07-122.19
Sweden	6.6522-6.6597
Switzerland	1.1604-1.1614

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.5382-1.5408
Australia dollar	2.0802-2.0834
Bahrain dinar	0.5745-0.5865
Brazil real*	1.4925-1.4966
China yuan	12.00 Buy
Cyprus pound	0.698-0.708
Finland markka	6.6625-6.7785
Greece drachma	364.25-371.25
Hong Kong dollar	11.9088-11.9212
India rupee	53.41-54.37
Indonesia rupiah	3490.0-3558.6
Kuwait dinar KD	0.456-0.466
Malaysia ringgit	3.9085-3.9126
New Zealand dollar	2.3639-2.3680
Pakistan rupee	52.62 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.5475-5.6715
Singapore dollar	2.1803-2.1833
S Africa rand (com)	5.595-5.697
U A E dirham	5.595-5.719

*Barclays Bank GTS * Lloyds Bank*

FT-SE VOLUMES

3I	479	Legal & Gn	180
ASDA Gp	3,100	Lloyds Bk	3,600
Abbey Nll	389	Marks Spr	1,100
Allied Dom	1,800	NatWst Bk	1,000
Argos	105	Nat Grid	3,000
Argyll Gp	583	Nat Power	1,100
AB Foods	213	NW Water	1,100
BAA	566	P & O	554
BAT Inds	1,900	Pearson	946
BOC	126	Pilkington	329
BP	11,000	PowerGen	1,100
BSkyB	588	Prudential	1,300
BTR	12,000	REXAM	976
BT	3,700	RMC	283
Bk of Scot	490	RTZ	1,200
Barclays	2,500	Rank Org	363
Bass	1,600	Reckitt Col	322
Blue Circle	792	Redland	2,000
Boots	9,800	Reed Intl	1,000
BAe	630	Rentokil	450
BA	1,300	Reuters	1,200
Brit Gas	9,700	Rolls Royce	1,900
Brit Steel	4,700	Royal Ins	618
Burmah Cstl	175	Ryl Bk Scot	384
Burton	1,900	Sainsbury	481
Cable Wire	1,200	Schroders	7
Cadbury	2,100	Scot & New	123
Carlton Cms	360	Scot Power	963
Cm Union	1,100	Svrn Trent	84
Cookson	922	Shell Trans	6,500
Courtaulds	1,300	Siebe	283
Enterpr Oil	537	SmKl Bch	774
For & Col	406	Smith Nph	1,400
Forte	2,300	Smiths Inds	72
GKN	355	Sthern Elec	32
GRE	289	Std Chartd	737
GUS	1,100	Sun Allnce	701
Gen Acc	365	Ti Gp	431
Gen Elec	4,500	TSB	12,000
Glaxo Well	1,800	Tate & Lyle	1,600
Granada	430	Tesco	17,000
Grand Met	1,200	Thames W	121
Guinness	2,300	Thrn EMI	289
HSBC	796	Tomkins	2,300
Hanson	24,000	Unilever	916
ICI	659	Vodafone	1,300
Kingfisher	676	Whitbread	201
LASMO	3,600	Wllms Hld	204
Ladbroke	1,600	Wolseley	691
Land Secs	169	Zeneca	840

WALL STREET

	Dec 22 midday	Dec 21 close
AMP Inc	38¼	38
AMR Corp	73¾	73¾
AT & T	66	65¾
Abbott Labs	40¾	40¾
Advanced Micro	17¼	17¼
Aetna Life	71¼	71½
Ahmanson (HF)	26½	26¼
Air Prod & Chem	51¼	52¾
AirTouch Comm	27½	27¼
Alberto-Culver B	35¼	35¼
Albertson's	32¾	32¼
Alcan Alumnm	31¼	31¼
Alco Standard	45¼	45¼
Allied Signal	48¼	48
Alum Co of Am	54¾	53¾
Amax Gold Inc	7¼	7¼
Amerada Hess	51¼	52
Amer Brands	44¼	44¼
Amer El Power	40¼	40
Amer Express	41¼	41¼
Amer Genl Corp	34¾	34¼
Amer Home Pr	96	95¾
Amer Intl	92	91¼
Amer Stores	25¼	25¼
Amer Standard	29¼	29
Ameritech	58¼	58¼
Amoco	71¼	71¼
Anheuser-Busch	66¼	66
Apple Computer	32¼	32¼
Archer Daniels	17¼	17¼
Armco	5¼	5¼
Armstrng Wrld	62¼	62¼
Asarco	31¼	31¼
Ashland Oil	35¼	35¼
Atl Richfield	110¼	110¼
Auto Data Pro	72	73
Avery Dennison	49	49
Avon Products	75¼	75¼
Baker Hughes	23¼	23¼
Baltim Gas & El	28	28¼
Banc One	37¼	37¼
BankAmerica	64¼	63¼
Bank of NY	47¼	47¼
Bankers Tr NY	66¼	65¼
Barnett Banks	58¼	58¼
Bausch & Lomb	39¼	39¼
Baxter Intl	41¼	41¼
Becm Dicknsn	73¼	71¼
Bell Atlantic	66¼	66
Bell Industries	22¼	22¼
BellSouth	42¼	42¼
Black & Decker	34¼	34
Block (H&R)	40¼	40¼
Boeing	77¼	76¼
Boise Cascade	37¼	37¼
Bristol Myrs Sq	84¼	84¼
Browning Ferris	28¼	29
Brunswick	22¼	22¼
Burlington Nthn	76¼	76¼
CNA Financial	113¼	113¼
CPC Intl	69¼	69¼
CSX	43¼	87¼
Campbell Soup	59¼	59¼
Can Pacific	17¼	17¼
Cptl Cities ABC	124¼	123¼
Carolina Pwr	34¼	34¼
Caterpillar	61	61¼
Central & SW	27¼	28¼
Champion Intl	42	41¼
Chase Manhat	59¼	59¼
Chemical Bk	58¼	58¼
Chevron Corp	52¼	51¼
Chrysler	55¼	54¼
Chubb Corp	98	96¼
Cigna Corp	105¼	105¼
Citicorp	66¼	66¼
Clorox	72¼	73¼
Coastal Corp	37¼	37¼
Coca Cola	71¼	72¼
Colgate-Palmolive	70	71
Columbia Gas	43¼	43¼
ColumbiaHCA	50¼	51¼
Compaq Comp	49¼	48¼
Comp Ass Int	59	57¼
Conagra	41¼	41¼
Conrail	68¼	69¼
Cons Edison	31¼	31¼
Cons Nat Gas	44¼	44¼
Cooper Inds	35¼	35¼
Corestates	37	37¼
Corning Inc	30¼	30¼
Crown Cork	41¼	41¼
Dana Corp	30	30
Dayton Hudson	75¼	74¼
Deere	35¼	35¼
Delta Air Lines	74¼	74¼
Deluxe Corp	27¼	27¼
Detroit Edison	34¼	34¼
Digital Equip	63¼	63¼
Dillard Dept St	28¼	28¼
Disney (Walt)	61	60¼
Dominion Res	41¼	41¼
Donelley (RR)	38¼	38
Dover Corp	37¼	36¼
Dow Chemical	70¼	70¼
Dow Jones	39¼	39¼
Dresser	24	24¼
Duke Power	47¼	47¼
Dun & Bradstreet	63¼	64
Du Pont	69¼	68¼

	Dec 22 midday	Dec 21 close
Eastman Kodak	66¼	66¼
Eaton Corp	57¼	55¼
Emerson Elec	79¼	78¼
Engelhard Corp	21¼	21¼
Enron Corp	37¼	35¼
Entergy	28¼	29
Ethyl Corp	12¼	12¼
Exxon	81¼	81
FMC Corp	69	70
FPL Group	46¼	46
Federal Express	71	69¼
Fed Nat Mtge	116¼	115¼
First Interstate	135¼	136¼
First Union Rlty	7¼	7¼
Fleet Finl Grp	42¼	42¼
Fluor Corp	65¼	66¼
Ford Motor	29¼	29¼
GTE Corp	44¼	44¼
Gannett	61¼	61¼
Gap Inc Del	44¼	43¼
Gen Dynamics	61¼	61
Gen Electric	71¼	70¼
Gen Mills	57¼	57¼
Gen Motors	53	52¼
Gen Reinsurance	153¼	154¼
Gen Signal	32	32¼
Genuine Parts	41¼	41¼
Georgia Pac	69¼	69
Gillette	51¼	51¼
Glaxo Wellc ADR	27¼	27¼
Goodrich (BF)	68¼	68¼
Goodyear Tire	44¼	44¼
Grace (W&R)	59¼	59¼
Grt Atl Pac Tea	23¼	23¼
Great Wstn Fin	25¼	25¼
Halliburton	49¼	49¼
Harcourt General	41¼	40¼
Heinz (HJ)	33¼	32¼
Hercules	57	57¼
Hershey Foods	65¼	65¼
Hewlett Packard	84¼	83¼
Hilton Hotels	61¼	61¼
Home Depot	47¼	47¼
Homestake Mng	15¼	16
Honeywell	47¼	47¼
Household Intl	58¼	57¼
Houston Inds	24¼	24¼
Humana	26¼	25¼
ITT Corp	51¼	51¼
Illinois Tool	59¼	59¼
Illinova	29¼	29¼
INCO	33¼	33¼
Ingersoll Rand	35¼	35¼
Inland Steel	24¼	25
Intel Corp	59¼	59¼
IBM	91¼	90¼
Intl Flav & Fr	49¼	49¼
Intl Paper	36¼	37
James River Va	23¼	23¼
Jhnsn & Jhnsn	86¼	86¼
Kellogg	76¼	75¼
Kerr-McGee	61¼	61¼
Kimberly-Clark	79¼	77¼
Kmart	7¼	7¼
Knight-Ridder	63¼	63¼
Lilly (Eli)	56¼	55¼
Limited Inc	17	17
Lincoln Nat	52¼	52¼
Litton	43¼	43¼
Liz Claiborne	28¼	28¼
Lockheed Martin	77¼	77¼
Louisiana Pac	23¼	23¼
MCI Comm	27¼	27¼
Marriott Int	37¼	37¼
Marsh & McLnn	89¼	89¼
Masco Corp	30¼	30¼
May Dept St	42	42¼
Maytag Corp	20¼	20¼
McDonalds	44¼	45
McDonnell D	89¼	88¼
McGraw Hill	86¼	85¼
Mead Corp	51¼	51¼
Medtronic	56¼	56¼
Mellon Bk	52¼	52¼
Melville Corp	30¼	31¼
Merck Inc	64¼	65
Merrill Lynch	51¼	50¼
Microsoft	89¼	90
Minnesota Mine	64¼	65¼
Mobil Corp	111¼	110¼
Monsanto	123¼	124¼
Morgan (JP)	80¼	80
Motorola Inc	57¼	57
Natl Semi	23¼	22¼
Natl Service Ind	32	31¼
Navistar Int	11¼	11¼
NY Times A	30¼	30¼
Newmont Mng	43¼	43¼
Niag Mohawk	10	9¼
Nike B	67¼	67¼
NL Industries	12¼	12¼
Noram Energy	9¼	8¼
Nordstrom	41¼	40¼
Norfolk Sthrn	77¼	77¼
Nthn State Pwr	49¼	48¼
Norwest Corp	33¼	33¼
Nynex Corp	50¼	50¼
Occidental Pet	21¼	21¼
Ohio Edison	23¼	23¼
Oracle	43¼	42¼

	Dec 22 midday	Dec 21 close
Oryx Energy Co	13¼	13¼
Owens Corning	45¼	45¼
PPG Industries	45	44¼
PNC Bank	30	29¼
PP&L Res	25	25
Paccar Inc	45¼	46¼
Pacificorp	21¼	21¼
Pac Enterprises	28¼	28¼
Pac Gas & Elect	28	28
Pac Telesis	33¼	33¼
Pall Corp	26¼	26¼
Panhandle East	27¼	27¼
Parker Hannifin	34¼	34¼
Peco Energy	30	29¼
Penney (JC)	45	45¼
Pennzoil	42¼	42¼
Pepsico	53¼	54¼
Pfizer	62¼	62¼
Pharm & Upjhn	39¼	39¼
Phelps Dodge	62¼	63¼
Philip Morris	88¼	88
Phillips Pet	33¼	33¼
Pitney Bowes	45¼	45¼
Polaroid	47¼	46¼
PriceCostco	15	14¼
Procter & Gmbl	82¼	82¼
Providian	39¼	40¼
Pub Serv E & G	30¼	30¼
Quaker Oats	34¼	34¼
Ralston Purina	63¼	63¼
Raychem Corp	56¼	56¼
Raytheon	45¼	46
Reebok Intl	27¼	27¼
Reynolds Metals	54¼	54
Roadway Srvcs	49¼	50
Rockwell Intl	51¼	51¼
Rohm & Haas	62¼	62¼
Royal Dutch	139¼	138¼
Rubbermaid	25¼	25¼
SBC Commns	57	56¼
Safeco Corp	34¼	34¼
St Paul's Cos	56¼	55¼
Salomon Inc	34¼	34¼
Sara Lee Corp	31¼	31¼
Seecorp	17¼	17¼
Schering Plough	55¼	54¼
Schlumberger	69	68¼
Seagram	35¼	35¼
Sears Roebuck	39¼	39¼
Shell Trans	80¼	80¼
Sherwin Wllms	40¼	40¼
Skyline Corp	21¼	21
Snap-On-Tools	46	46¼
Southern Co	24¼	24¼
Sprint Corp	39¼	39¼
Stanley Works	50¼	49¼
Sun Company	26¼	26¼
Sun Microsys	47¼	47
Suntrust	68¼	68¼
Supervalu	31¼	31¼
Sysco Corp	32¼	32¼
TRW Inc	76¼	76¼
TCC Inds	2¼	2¼
Tandem Comp	11	10¼
Tandy Corp	41¼	40¼
Teledyne	24¼	24¼
Temple Inland	42¼	42¼
Tenneco	47¼	47¼
Texaco	78¼	77¼
Texas Inst	50¼	49¼
Texas Utilities	40¼	40¼
Textron	70¼	70¼
Time Warner	38¼	38¼
Times-Mirror A	33¼	34¼
Timken	38¼	38¼
Torchmark	45	44¼
Toys R Us	23	23¼
Transamerica	73¼	73¼
Travelers	59¼	57¼
Tribune	60¼	60¼
Tyco Labs	34¼	33¼
UST Inc	34¼	34¼
UAL	174¼	180¼
US Inds	17¼	17¼
USX Marathon	19¼	19¼
Unicom	33	32¼
Unilever NV	139¼	139¼
Union Camp	47¼	46¼
Union Carbide	38	37¼
Union Pacific	65¼	65
Unisys Corp	5¼	5¼
USAIR Group	13¼	13¼
USF&G Corp	17	17
US Life	29¼	29¼
United Tech	95¼	95¼
Unocal Corp	29¼	29¼
VF Corp	52¼	52¼
WMX Tech	28¼	28¼
Wal-Mart Stores	23¼	23¼
Warner-Lambert	97¼	93¼
Wells Fargo	213¼	214
Westinghouse El	16¼	16¼
Weyerhaeuser	42¼	42¼
Whirlpool	53	53
Whitman	22¼	22¼
Winn Dixie	36¼	36¼
Woolworth	13¼	13¼
Wrigley (Wm) Jr	52¼	51¼
Xerox	137¼	137¼
Yellow Corp	12¼	12¼

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INVESTMENT 26

Ostrich could prove too rich for most tastes

WEEKEND MONEY

INVESTMENT 29

Unit trust winners and losers of 1995

A personal touch for the sales

Morag Preston looks at bargain finance deals to be had as big lenders jostle for customers

Before the turkey is made into soup, the winter sales are in full swing. In anticipation of this annual bargain bonanza, the high street banks are holding a sale of their own, discounting the rates on their personal loans. But the money borrowed will not all be spent on new sofas and suits. Around 30 per cent of those taking loans from the Alliance & Leicester use the money to repay other debts.

In an increasingly competitive market, banks and building societies may not necessarily offer the cheapest deals. Anyone with motor insurance, for example, can apply for a loan from the insurer Direct Line, which could be a loan best buy, whether you want to borrow £1,000 to £15,000 (the maximum personal loan usually available).

Store cards, traditionally one of the most expensive ways to finance a spending spree, have yet to cut their rates, despite this month's decrease in base rates.The Frasercard, for example, carries an annual percentage rate (APR or true rate) of 29.9 per cent. Others offer rates between 25 per cent and 29 per cent.

Selfridges' and Marks & Spencer are among the cheapest at 24.9 per cent and 25.3 per cent respectively. But it could be cheaper to take a Marks & Spencer personal loan. Following a rate reduction, account customers will be charged 16.9 per cent on loans between £500 and £2,999. Non-account customers will pay 17.9 per cent.

Barclays Bank was one of the first to reduce personal loan rates. From December 27, Barclayloan customers will be charged 14.9 per cent, down from 15.9 per cent, on loans of £7,500-£10,000. Loans between £3,000 and £7,400 have been cut 1 per cent to 17.9 per cent.

The National Westminster swiftly followed the Barclays lead. From January 2 until the end of February, customers will be charged 15.9 per cent on loans between £2,100 and £4,000, and 14.9 per cent on loans of more than £4,100.

Abbey National is also offering a discount of up to 1.5 per cent between December 27, 1995 and February 1996 on loans of £500 to £15,000. With effect from January 1, the Alliance & Leicester Building Society is cutting its rates from 16.5 per cent to 15.3 per cent on loans between £2,500 and £4,999.

The Nationwide Building Society, which offers cheaper rates to its own customers, has cut its personal loans 1 per cent until the end of December. Customers who want £7,050-£10,000 will be charged 16.9 per cent, while non-customers will be charged 19.9 per cent.

At Direct Line Insurance, you will be charged 17.5 per cent on loans between £1,000 and £1,999, or a competitive 14.9 per cent on loans between £2,000 and £4,999. But you must hold either a Direct Line motor policy or have your car fully insured elsewhere.

A word of warning: only take out a personal loan if you want to borrow for more than six months. Short term, it may be cheaper to use a credit card or authorised overdraft.

WHAT LEADING LENDERS CHARGE

Unsecured personal loan of £3,000 over 36 months

Lender	APR %	Monthly payment	Total payment
Abbey National	15.5	103.26	3717.36
Alliance & Leics	15.3	103.00	3708.00
Barclays	17.9	106.42	3831.12
Direct Line	14.9	102.59	3693.24
Nationwide cstmr	18.9	106.62	3874.32
NatWest	15.9	103.77	3735.72
M&S cstmr	15.9	103.77	3735.72

Forth to the sales in the Fifties armed with a personal loan. Today's shoppers have an average £3,000 loan in their bags

Key points that dispel loan fears

TO OVERCOME the initial fear of applying for a personal loan, Barclays is able to suggest some key factors for customers to consider before broaching the subject with their bank (Morag Preston writes).

Above all, banks are looking for signs of "stability", according to Tim Kiy, marketing manager for consumer lending at Barclays. He adds: "We want to know what position customers are in to repay the loan."

Mr Kiy advises customers to look at their income in terms of what is coming in and going out. A high gross monthly income and a high percentage of remaining income after expenditure are encouraging signs when evaluating your circumstances. In the eyes of a bank, the more you earn, the more likely you will be in a position to repay.

Banks are also interested in whether you live in your own home or with your parents — as a sign of financial commitment. The longer you have lived in your own home, the more attractive your circumstances are to a bank. Living in furnished rented accommodation, on the other hand, does not suggest stability. Owning your own home outright is more promising than a mortgaged property.

Whether you already have a cheque account or a savings account with the bank might make a difference to your prospects of obtaining a loan. The more a bank knows about you already, the stronger its position to make an informed decision on your eligibilty. Your prospects are good if you have taken out a loan before, which you repaid in full. The number of years spent with your present employer also indicates stability.

"None of these factors can be considered in isolation," warns Mr Kiy. "It is the combination that matters. These are just some of the areas that customers can think about . . . before they come into the bank for a talk."

Weekend Money is edited by Anne Ashworth

Uncle, they shrunk my present

Check the cost of converting foreign cheques into sterling

AN AMERICAN uncle has sent a present, a $100 cheque drawn on a US bank account. The gift may seem generous, but Scrooge-style bank commission charges will shrink its value.

British banks charge a flat rate commission of 15 to 20 per cent for changing a cheque drawn on a foreign account in sterling.

If you had changed the $100 a week ago, the Midland would have given a rate of $1.553 to the pound and charged a £6 commission, the minimum payable on all such transactions up to £200. You would have walked out with a mere £58.37. TSB's lower commission charge of £5 was more than offset by an unattractive exchange rate of $1.569 to the pound. So you would have received £58.73. Lloyds and National Westminster charge £5 commission, but the $1.548 exchange rate at Lloyds would have given a net £59.60, pipping NatWest's £59.52 based on a rate of $1.550.

Barclays charge the lowest commission, £4, so in spite of an exchange rate of $1.560,. you would have got £60.10. The banks accept that minimum commission rates are steep for small personal transactions, but claim that the administrative cost of processing a modest cheque is as high as the cost of processing a much larger amount. However, research has revealed a disturbing unawareness among branch managers and staff of the correct commission to charge customers.

One TSB branch in north London wanted a commission of £8, rather than £5, to change a $100 cheque. Similarly, branch staff at Barclays and NatWest were charging £9 until reminded of the correct rate. This means that you should check the charges, especially as the high street banks will change cheques only for their account-holding customers. The London branch of Bank of America sends anyone wanting to cash a small cheque to Corporate Foreign Exchange, a bureau de change that specialises in meeting the needs of hotels, travel agencies and tour operators. It will also change a modest dollar, franc or mark cheque. On presentation of a passport, you will pay a 2 per cent service charge at CSE in Buckingham Palace Road, close to Victoria station.

This week, CSE was offering an exchange rate of $1.556, which would have translated $100 into £63. If you change larger amounts, CSE's rates are more favourable, unlike those of the banks.

DAVID RUDNICK

Contrarian's farewell to 1995

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

ANTHONY HARRIS

This is this column's farewell to 1995, and also mine to the column. It would be hard to devise a more suitable finale to a series that has been mainly concerned with that essential for successful investment: market timing. Anyone who bought in the spring, as recommended here, should by now have a profit of well over 20 per cent; but before you boast of paper gains, remember the veteran's question: "Oh yes; and when did you sell?"

We have just had the preliminary rumbles of the earthquake that ends every bull run; so now is time to think about the negative and largely neglected side to successful strategy, taking your profits. Some will have done so, for the early warning came not from the market, but from market comment. In the spring, the mood was gloomy; and despite the amazing performance since then, it is only a few weeks since it stopped being largely sceptical. Nothing unusual about that: problems always look larger from close up. But by December the tone had changed markedly. Every circular had opted for post-event wisdom: the rise was justified, and must continue.

Universal optimism means that all likely good news is already discounted in current prices, so a true contrarian would not have waited for this month's shocks. The only surprises are likely to be nasty ones; time, on these grounds, to cash in; and if keeping out of step was the whole secret, that would be that. It isn't, though; the market timer must study two other guides to navigation — crowd psychology and the flow of money. Crowd psychology is the investor's greatest friend, for it dictates that all market trends, up and down, are overdone. If you have the necessary nerve, buy when you sniff mature panic, sell when mania is nearing the edge of reason. You will never get it exactly right, but nearly right is more than good enough.

But what moves these tides? I have argued here that it is money. When activity is slack and inflation low, the central banks try to stimulate the economy with easy money. But they cannot force a demoralised businessman or a frightened consumer to borrow, so at first very little happens in the real economy. This is the phase that Keynes described as "pushing on a string".

Financial assets are a different matter: as interest rates fall, bonds and equities rise, and takeover bidders stalk the land. In Japan and across the Channel the string is still hanging in idle loops: expect weak economies and strong markets.

The British economy may revive next year, as the Chancellor expects: he has contributed not so much a stimulus as a slight slackening of the reins. That prospect, allied to dividend yields of about 4 per cent, suggests that our domestic bull is not yet exhausted. In the US, though, there is much less doubt. Consumer borrowing is sharply up, investment is still high, and the current economic slowdown looks strictly temporary. But if there is more than a weak revival, output is not the only thing likely to rise. Inflation, just when we have stopped worrying about it, must be back on the list of probables. So you should hope for good economic news; but, if we get it, nervous markets. A crash? Possible, anyway.

So there you have it: a rounded contrarian philosophy. Trade against the ruling mood — but let the mood have a good run first. Trade with sensible forecasts, but against the actual economic news. In the words of the wisest of the old stock market saws, buy on the expectation, sell on the news. You may, of course, prefer a more peaceful life, and simply hold a well-chosen portfolio; run your gains and cut your losses, to cite another sound cliche. History will be with you, and especially the history of the London market. So trade, if that is your sport: with a clear head, you should prosper. Or sit tight, starve the brokers, and you will prosper too.

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Karen Zagor takes a look at an off-beat investment that is gaining in popularity but may be hazardous

Problems could hatch from ostriches

Is it sensible to invest in an ostrich farm? asks a reader of *The Times*, whose curiosity had been piqued by advertisements for the Ostrich Farming Corporation. At first glance, the prospect looks tempting. The Ostrich Farming Corporation, which claims to have the biggest and most technically advanced ostrich farms in Europe, took in about £2 million last month by promising would-be ostrich owners minimum returns of 51.6 per cent a year for at least five years. This is far higher than anything a bank or building society could offer. It is also much higher than anything the top UK unit trusts produced over five years, according to research by Micropal, which shows the top fund turning in an annualised growth rate of 42.33 per cent in the five years to December 18.

In its advertising, the corporation quotes Dun & Bradstreet, the business information group, describing ostrich produce as "the cash crop of the Nineties." It does not mention that the report was written in 1991. Dun & Bradstreet says the Ostrich Farming Corporation used its name without authority and that the quote came from an article and not from research generated by Dun & Bradstreet. Philip Mellor, of Dun & Bradstreet in the UK, says: "They hadn't sought our permission to use our name. They gave us an undertaking several months ago that it wouldn't happen again." Yet the ad, quoting Dun & Bradstreet, ran in this week's *Investors Chronicle*.

A closer look at the corporation's figures shows it is not using the same basis for annual growth calculations as the financial services industry. OFC uses a flat rate, dividing the five years growth rate by five. Using Micropal's methods for calculating a compound rate, the corporation promise is a more modest yearly growth rate of nearly 21 per cent, far lower than the 32.92 per cent offered by the tenth-ranked UK unit trust. Robin Higgens, the communications director, says: "We are not a financial product. We do not have experience in financial products."

Instead of buying shares in a company, investors with the corporation buy their own ostrich. The purchase includes all feed, accommodation and veterinary bills. In addition, the corporation allocates a certain number of chicks to the owner every year. The care package includes livery, hatchery and incubation costs. The corporation promises that it will buy back a set number of yearling birds every year for five years, at a guaranteed price of £500 apiece if the owner wants to sell. If an ostrich dies, the corporation will replace it with a similar bird. If the breeder bird fails to breed, the corporation will still allocate the agreed number of yearlings to the owner.

Given that investments in objects, such as animals, do not fall under the protective umbrella of an investment regulator, there is a danger that an ostrich farm investment scheme could become the stuff of nightmares. This has already happened in the US, where the Securities and Investments Commission has closed some ostrich investment operations.

CHRIS HARRIS

In at the birth: investors who plump for the ostrich as a money-spinner will find that almost every square inch of the bird has some commercial value

■ **Why buy an ostrich?** With the exception of the head and feet, almost every square inch of the ostrich has some commercial value. The plumes are used for everything from theatrical costumes to non-static dusters. The OFC says the feathers sell for £400 per lb. The hide is even more valuable, fetching up to £40 per sq ft. Each bird produces on average 14 sq ft of high quality leather. But it is the meat where owners can hope to make a killing. Ostriches produce about 80lb of usable meat, most of it from the leg. The Ostrich Farming Corporation compares ostrich meat in taste and texture to a fillet of beef steak, with a fraction of the fat and cholesterol. A meat that is low calorie, low cholesterol and delicious is bound to appeal to future generations of health-conscious eaters. And if fear of "mad cow" disease grows, we may all be eating ostrich.

■ **The market:** In the UK, ostrich meat is sold at Harrods, a few specialist butchers and a handful of Asda shops. Supermarkets can only sell ostrich which has been slaughtered at EU regulated abattoirs. There are none in the UK, so Asda imports its ostrich from France. The price, of £9.99 a lb, puts it beyond the reach of the daily dinner table. The hope is that as demand goes up, prices will fall. Asda says its ostrich meat experiment has been a success, and that it will continue to offer ostrich in three of its stores in the new year. A spokeswoman said: "Sales of the meat have justified its presence, but demand is limited and will continue to be limited until the price comes down." The Ostrich Farming Corporation's literature says it would take 1.18 million breeding birds to supply meat equivalent to 10 per cent of the beef market in the UK, Europe and North America. It notes that meat consumption in North America is five times the level of the UK. When ostriches will account for 10 per cent of the beef market is unclear. Americans consumed only 200 ostriches in 1994, although the American Ostrich Association says the numbers are now rising rapidly.

■ **What about the Ostrich Farming Corporation scheme?** The corporation is aiming to attract investors who believe that ostrich farming is the way of the future, but who do not want to get their hands dirty on the farm itself. As an investment, independent financial advisers recommend caution. Mark Bolland, at Chamberlain de Broë, says: "If the corporation goes bust in two years' time because the birds don't produce as well as they should or the market becomes flooded with ostrich farms, the ostrich owner would not enjoy the protection normally avaiable to investors. Instead of owning the birds, I would rather invest in a company where perhaps I wouldn't get anything back in the first few years but if the business did well I would stand to profit in the future."

The lack of real protection is at the heart of the problem with investing in the corporation's scheme. The brochure highlights the "Guaranteed Buy Back Option." But the guarantee is only as good as the company's ability to pay.

The corporation's brochure says: "Insurance of the owner's asset is provided for the owner by an inclusive like-for-like replacement programme." This "insurance" is not, however, backed up by a commercial insurance policy. The only insurance is the contractual agreement between the investor and the company.

Robin Higgens says: "It would be far too expensive actually to insure the livestock. But the risk is minimal. You have our word for the insurance in our contract, which is covered by British laws." Brian Ketchell, the corporation's managing director, says the company is growing so fast that it is talking to underwriters about insuring the whole flock next year.

Nowhere in the brochure does the Ostrich Farming Corporation warn investors they could lose money if things go wrong. The corporation is not obliged to warn investors they could lose out because technically investors are buying an animal, not a financial product, and therefore are not covered by the Financial Services Act. As a result, the scheme is not regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and investors have no fallback if the business fails. Nor are they entitled to any payments from the Investors Compensation Scheme. Mr Higgens says: "It is not a financial investment because you are not investing in money, you are investing in an ostrich."

There has also been some concern about the business acumen of Mr Ketchell. He was previously managing director of Video Magic, a video rental chain, which went into administration in 1991. His subsequent video store business ended in liquidation. Press reports have linked him to the Alchemy pyramid scheme which was shut down after an investigation by the Department of Trade. Mr Ketchell says that he was a member of the Alchemy club, but was not involved in running the business.

Kevin Jones, Alchemy's former head, is now doing OFC marketing work in Holland. Mr Ketchell says Mr Jones "has no direct or indirect access to the company's funds, the owner's stock or, indeed, any direct or indirect impact on the way the business is run. He is an agent in Holland and is doing an excellent job."

The head of the OFC's farming operations in Belgium does have a good reputation as an ostrich farmer, but whether the corporation will be able to fulfil its promises remains to be seen.

There is some concern that the company's expectations for growth may be difficult to sustain. If 1,000 investors took part in one of the less extravagant corporation plans by investing £6,000 apiece, they could expect to have a total of 31,000 ostriches within five years. Wayne Bardsley, who runs Hill House Ostrich Farm, the biggest ostrich farm in Britain, says: "I have never seen 31,000 ostriches in a field. They don't even slaughter that many in individual South African abattoirs." Indeed, at the moment there is only one EU-approved ostrich abattoir in Europe.

As for the merits of investing more generally, Clive Madeiros, a leading ostrich vet in the UK, says: "The ostrich is a very adaptable creature. I do not foresee a problem adapting the ostrich to conditions in northern Europe, provided the farmers are well informed and do their job properly. If you were to design a meat for the 21st century it would be ostrich. But while I think that good farmers will be able to make a decent living from ostriches, I don't see fantastic returns."

BIRDS OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER

The ostrich, otherwise known as *Struthio camelus*, is the largest living bird. It is a native of Africa, but adapts well to other climes.

- ■ Males can reach a height of nearly eight foot and weigh up to 350lb. Females are smaller. About half of an ostrich's height is in its neck. In the wild, they live for up to 80 years.
- ■ During the egg-laying season, usually March through to September, a good layer will deliver 100 eggs, while a bad one will lay 30. Ostrich eggs weigh up to 3lb. Newborn chicks weigh about 2lb and are ten inches tall. In 1994, the world average number of yearlings per breeding hen was ten.
- ■ Ostriches cannot fly, but they have strong legs and run very fast. When frightened they can reach speeds of 40 miles-an-hour. They can also deliver a strong enough kick to disembowel a man.
- ■ Ostriches do not bury their heads in the sand, but when threatened they fling themselves on the ground with their necks outstretched in an attempt to become invisible.

Source: The Encyclopedia Britannica and the American Ostrich Association.

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

When East Midlands Electricity was a shining example

From Mr Gordon K. Moore

Sir, I read the interesting article on the water service (Weekend Money, December 9). When I started working for the East Midlands Electricity Board in 1951, the fixed quarterly charge for domestic consumers was between five shillings and a maximum of ten shillings, based on rateable value. The first block of 78 units cost ¾d per unit and the remainder ½d per unit.

There was a hire scheme, with an excellent free maintenance service. Cookers were four shillings per quarter, wash boilers 2/6d per quarter and immersion heaters 6/6d per quarter. Allowing for RPI changes, clearly there is a lesser service and relatively more costly supply.

Yours,
GORDON K. MOORE,
51 St Clare's Close,
Farley Road,
Littleover Hill,
Derby.

Missing facts

From Ms Janet Langdon

Sir, There were three essential ingredients missing from your review of the water industry in the privatisation special article on December 9.

First, while it is true that water bills will have increased, on average by 77 per cent between 1989 and 1996 (not 1994), investment has increased by more than 250 per cent. Secondly, because privatisation has brought rapid and substantial improvements in efficiency, price rises in future years will be lower than they were in the 1980s. So, with the industry's massive investment programme continuing, prices will represent far better value for money than ever. Thirdly, it is not correct to give the impression that water customers alone have borne the full burden of this greatly increased investment. While two-thirds of all profits have been reinvested in the water businesses, investment has been running at twice the level of those profits. So billions of pounds have been borrowed too.

Yours sincerely,
JANET LANGDON,
Director, The Water
Services Association
of England and Wales,
1 Queen Anne's Gate, London.

Water bills leave a sinking feeling

People moan and groan about the cost of rising electricity and water bills, but few customers have the evidence in [illegible]

WEEKEND
MONEY

collected by Tunbridge Wells District Council as the agent of Southern Water Authority. Between 1980 and 1989, Mr Venables [illegible]

Achilles' heel in building society interest exemption

From Mr J. U. Neukom

Sir, Much to be applauded is Mr Moore's idea (Weekend Money Letters, December 9) that more equal treatment should be given to building society savers relative to the capital gains tax concessions.

Despite the want of logic so often manifest in taxation, there may regrettably be an Achilles' heel in an exemption from tax of the first £6,000 of building society interest: truly representative of capital may be only that part of the interest which makes good the inflationary depreciation of the investment. But how about the indexation concession available for capital gains?

One supposes, for the sake of illustration, that one third of gross building society interest goes towards protection of the investment's real value, and is therefore to be treated as capital, only the other two thirds should be liable to tax, achievable perhaps by lowering the applicable rate to a rounded figure of, say, 15 per cent.

When the Chancellor has proposed in his Budget an applicable rate of 20 per cent, there may be a case here with which to press for greater reduction.

Yours truly,
JOHN U. NEUKOM,
Timber Hill,
Stephens Grove,
Helsby,
Warrington.

☐ Letters or information for Weekend Money may be faxed to 0171-782 5082. Letters should include a daytime telephone number. *The Times* cannot always give individual replies or advice, and original documents should not be sent in.

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An ostrich not for Christmas

COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH

Personal Finance Editor

For Christmas, a tale about birds. Not partridges in pear trees, French hens, turtle doves or even turkeys, but ostriches.

These unlovely creatures are being promoted as the investment of the late Nineties, with promises of astoundingly high returns (see page 30). The meat of the ostrich is the dream of the nervous Nineties carnivore. Succulent as *filet mignon* but low in fat and cholesterol, designed to appeal to diners plagued with fears of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. The rest of the ostrich can also be exploited for commercial gain. His hide can be turned into personal organiser binders, and his plumes into dusters. The ungainly *Struthio camelus* may be earthbound. But he is gazing at the stars.

Those who are attracted by this prospect should, however, be aware that their investment might, like the unfortunate ostrich, never take flight.

The Ostrich Farming Corporation, which advertises in specialist investment publications, promises income and "guaranteed" annual returns of as much as 51.6 per cent. But these eye-catching figures are not prepared according to the normal strict formulae. This detail should concern those who last month backed the Ostrich Farming Corporation with £2 million of their money, acquiring each their very own feathered friend for fun and profit.

They have gone into an enterprise that, in spite of protestations to the contrary by the management, sells itself as an investment but carries none of the usual safeguards.

If the venture were to fail, ostrich investors could not, for example, rely on the sheltering wing of the Investors Compensation Scheme. The previous pyramid marketing associations of a person closely linked with the company are another source of unease. At such revelations, even those with stronger nerves than the average ostrich might well turn tail.

The history of previous enterprises with a zoological bent is not an entirely happy one. It is not a case of four legs good, two legs bad, as those who, a few years ago, put their faith in a failed angora goat scheme can attest.

An ostrich is not for Christmas, unless you like your investments untamed.

Going cheap?

THE DASH to the high street that now traditionally follows the congealing of the Christmas pudding is this year accompanied by a never-to-be-repeated opportunity to get an apparently cheap personal loan (see page 25).

In common with half a dozen others, Barclays announces that it has "slashed" its rates, something of an exaggeration when the decreases are, at best, 2 per cent.

Although other interest rates have been in single figures since 1992, personal loan annual percentage rates (APRs) remain in the late teens and early twenties, even after the latest reductions. The banks see this type of lending as a useful way to recoup from customers some of the losses made on current accounts.

A £1,000 Barclayloan carries an APR of 14.9 per cent, but borrow £500 and you will pay 20.9 per cent. Take a £3,000 advance from the Nationwide Building Society and you will repay £4,011 as a non-customer of the society and only £137 less as a customer.

The current record demand for personal loans might suggest that people will pursue an extra £50 off a sofa, but do not care to ask the cost when they borrow. The truth is, however, that they are running scared from still more expensive credit and store cards.

KAPA PRESS/FILM: TRADING PLACES

A bonus may be something to celebrate at the Christmas party, but it is also something to protect from the taxman

Caroline Merrell on keeping the Revenue off end-of-year payouts

Taxing time at bonus beano

Thousands of City workers will enjoy a substantial Christmas bonus this year, after a spate of remunerative takeovers, which yield large fees to advisers.

Employee benefit consultants claim that this will be a bumper year for payouts as bank and securities houses reward their top-performing employees. Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley, the US groups, are among those who have had a prosperous 1995. It was revealed this week that some of Goldman Sachs's valued staff could get bonuses of as much as £2.25 million, on the back of a 169 per cent increase in profits to $1.37 billion (£890 million).

Others who do not work within the Square Mile may also be receiving lump sums equivalent to 50 per cent or more of their basic salary.

Philip Fisher, employee benefit director with Chantrey Vellacott, the accountancy practice, said that big bonuses were not confined to the City. He has been consulted by many companies wishing to make bonus payments. He said: "I came across a plumber recently who was on a £5,000 basic, but was anticipating making a £50,000 bonus."

Those lucky enough to benefit from this Christmas bonanza may be wondering how to deal with this extra money in the most tax-efficient way. Bonuses paid in cash are liable for income tax and National Insurance in the usual way, but, with a little planning, these can be avoided.

Employers can get round paying 10.2 per cent National Insurance, if they choose to pay the bonus in an asset that is not traded on an exchange, such as a Persian rug, a quantity of arsenic (used for industrial purposes and the extermination of rats) or an expensive painting. These assets should be easily convertible into the cash equivalent. NI-avoidance schemes based on gold bars or unit trusts have been outlawed.

There are less esoteric ways of saving tax and National Insurance on your bonus, and NI-avoidance schemes can be costly in accountancy and other professional fees. Tim Johnson, sales manager of RK Harrison Financial Planning, an employee benefit consultant, said the only really legitimate way for employers to avoid NI is to pay an equivalent sum into a pension on behalf of the employee or by putting the money into a Furb, a Funded Unapproved Retirement Benefits Scheme, an arrangement for the highly paid who have already used up their pension tax relief.

Investing the money in a pension saves on income tax because pension contributions get relief at the employee's highest rate of tax.

Those who wish to use their bonus in these ways must "waive" their bonuses, informing their employers they do not wish to receive the money in cash. The rules specify this must be done before they know how much they are going to receive. They must also take advice about how much can be contributed to the pension without going beyond Inland Revenue limits.

Occupational pension schemes can pay out only two thirds of an employee's final salary. Those who have personal pensions are restricted on the amount that can be contributed each year — from 17.5 per cent to 40 per cent according to age. If employees have used up their relief, the extra can go into a Furb. Higher-rate taxpayers pay only 20 per cent tax on the growth of funds in a Furb, a saving of 20 per cent, but get no relief on contributions.

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*Source: Micropal buying price to selling price with gross income reinvested since launch to 11.12.95. UK Enterprise Fund from 01.08.88 and from 03.12.90 +164.63%, 3rd out of 120; Smaller Companies Fund from 01.06.79 and from 03.12.90 +91.35%, 31st out of 53. Income and UK Equity Funds from 03.01.72 (the earliest date for which Micropal figures are available) and from 03.12.90 +110.64%, 9th out of 95 and +109.09%, 6th out of 85 respectively. **If any transfer is executed through a financial adviser, he may deduct his charge from the amount transferred.
Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise and investors may not get back the amount originally invested. Exchange rate changes may cause the value of overseas investments to rise or fall. The levels and bases of, and reliefs from, taxation may change. Tax reliefs referred to are those currently available and their value depends on the circumstances of the individual investor.
Issued by Schroder Investment Management Limited, regulated by IMRO.
Registered Office 33 Gutter Lane, London EC2V 8AS.

THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Financial traps of a divorce

SEVEN out of ten people have not made a will, according to Help the Aged's *Will Information Pack.* Designed to ease the process of making a will, the pack includes information on how to draw up or change your will, the likely consequences for your family if you die intestate, and a checklist of questions to ask when visiting a solicitor. For a free pack write to Help the Aged Wills and Legacies Department, St James's Walk, EC1R 0BE.

■ *The Finance of Divorce* is an invaluable guide for anyone involved in a divorce or separation, focusing on the financial side of the breakdown. It offers a comprehensive guide to issues such as financial arrangements for children and the obligations to a former spouse. The book, priced at £6.99, will be available from all bookshops from January 26, 1996.

LIZANNE ROSE

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Britannia BS 01538 392808	Capital Trust	Postal	£2,000	5.60	Yly
Co-operative Bank 0345 252000	Pathfinder	Instant	£5,000	5.62	Mly
B & W Asset 0800 303330	Instant Acc	Postal	£10,000	6.05	Yly
Skipton BS 01756 700511	3 High Street	Instant	£30,000	6.50	Yly

FIXED RATES	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
West Bromwich BS 0121-5257070	Guaranteed Grow	31.1.97	£5,000	6.80	F/OM
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Investment Cert	2yr bond	£1,000	6.60	F/Yly
Brmnghm Midshires BS 0645 720721	Quantum Fixed	3yr bond	£5,000	7.25	F/Yly
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Investment Cert	5yr bond	£1,000	7.25	F/Yly

NOTICE ACCOUNTS AND BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Nottingham BS 0115 9481444	Postmark	7 day p	£2,500	5.90	Yly
Bradford & Bingley BS 0345 248248	Direct 60	60 day p	£15,000	6.50	Yly
Chelsea BS 0800 272505	120 Account	120 day	£1,000	6.50	Yly
Halifax BS 01422 333333	Special Rsrv	1 yr bnd	£10,000	6.90	OM

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	0.96%G	12.10%	Nil C
Royal Bank of Scotland 0800 161616	MasterCard	1.14%	14.50%	Nil C
Frizzell Bank 0800 373191	MasterCard/Visa	1.17%	16.10%	£11

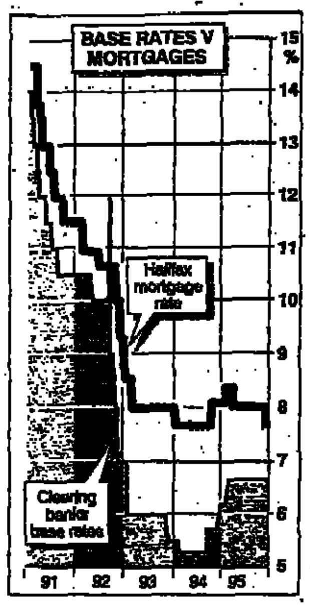
PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

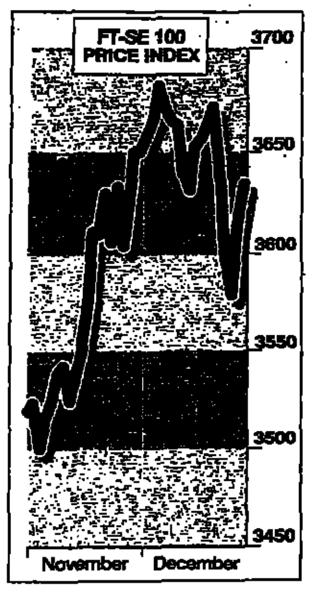
PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Direct Line 0141 2489966	14.90%E	£114.41	£102.59
Midland 0800 180180	15.40%	£116.54	£103.14
N&P BS 0800 808080	15.50%	£118.22	£103.29

Nb. A - Feeder account required. In the interest paid columns, C = no interest free period D = annual fee rebated £1.5K+ charged per annum E = Annual fee waived for 1st year for new accounts F = fixed rate (all other rates are variable); OM denotes interest paid on maturity

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01692 500 677)





NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates 25%	40%		Notice	Contact
Ordinary A/c[1]	2.00	1.50	1.20	10-10,000		01416494555
Investment A/c* [6]	5.25	3.94	3.15	20-499	1mth	01416494555
Income Bond* [6]	6.50	4.88	3.90	2,000-24,999	3mth	01253766151
First Opt Bond[4]	6.40	4.80	3.84	1,000-250,000		01416362558
42nd Issue Cert†[2][3]	5.85			100-10,000	8day	01913864900
Children's Bond†	7.85			25-1,000	1mth	01416382635
Gen Ext Rate	3.51					
Capital Bonds [6]	7.75	5.81	4.65	100-250,000	8day	01416362603
8th Index Linked†[3]	3.00			100-10,000	8day	01913864900
Pensnrs Bond S2 [6]	7.50	5.63	4.50	500-20,000[5]	60dy	01253766151

*[1] first £70 (£140 jt) of int tax free, inst accs for up to £100 [2] Additional hldgs up to £20,000 for reinvested proceeds †Tax free *Rates gross and vble [3] Guaranteed when held for 5 years [4] 0.3% net bonus for £20,000+ [5] £40,000 jt in addition to S1 holdings [6] Taxable but cred in full*

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male:	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Canada Lfe ....Level		£9,915	£11,087	£12,575
Stndrd Lfe ....Level		£9,956	£11,024	£12,416
Sun Lfe Can..........Level		£9,972	£11,016	£12,442
Generali ....Level		£9,817	£10,951	£12,299
Stalwart* ....Level		£10,016	£10,892	£12,015

SINGLE LIFE	Female:	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Prudential ....Level		£9,371	£10,109	£11,191
Sun Lfe Can ....Level		£9,230	£9,970	£11,063
Canada Life ....Level		£9,083	£9,927	£11,161
Generali ....Level		£9,024	£9,875	£11,053
Scott Widows..........Level		£9,230	£9,870	£10,830

JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	Male: Female:	Age 60 Age 55	Age 65 Age 60	Age 70 Age 65
Prudential ....Level		£8,980	£9,554	£10,358
Sun Lfe Can ....Level		£8,855	£9,429	£10,249
Canada Life ....Level		£8,666	£9,329	£10,266
MGM Assurance..Level		£8,678	£9,303	£10,190
Stalwart* ....Level		£8,767	£9,223	£9,840

* Maximum purchase £100,000, higher rates for smokers.
Source: Annuity Direct (0171 588 9393)

Compiled by: Lizanne Rose

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

Rates as at December 21, 1995

	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year	5,000	AIG Life	4.80
	10,000	AIG Life	4.90
	20,000	AIG Life	5.00
	50,000	AIG Life	5.05
2 Years	5,000	AIG Life	5.08
	10,000	AIG Life	5.13
	20,000	AIG Life	5.23
	50,000	AIG Life	5.33
3 Years	1,000	Premium Life	4.90
	5,000	Swiss Life	5.20
	50,000	Swiss Life	5.40
4 Years	1,000	Premium Life	5.40
	20,000	Fncial Assmce	5.50
	50,000	Fncial Assmce	5.60
5 Years	1,000	Premium Life	5.60
	3,000	Pinnacle Insur	6.51
	10,000	Pinnacle Insur	6.61
	50,000	Pinnacle Insur	6.71

Source: Chamberlain de Broë 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

CAPITAL GAINS TAX

The indexed rise for calculating the indexation allowance on assets disposed of in November 1995

Month purchased	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
January	-	0.813	0.725	0.642	0.556	0.498	0.450
February	-	0.806	0.718	0.629	0.551	0.492	0.445
March	0.886	0.802	0.712	0.614	0.549	0.489	0.439
April	0.848	0.777	0.690	0.581	0.534	0.472	0.416
May	0.835	0.770	0.684	0.573	0.531	0.470	0.411
June	0.830	0.766	0.679	0.570	0.532	0.470	0.405
July	0.830	0.756	0.681	0.573	0.536	0.472	0.404
August	0.829	0.748	0.666	0.569	0.531	0.467	0.388
September	0.830	0.741	0.662	0.570	0.524	0.463	0.382
October	0.821	0.735	0.652	0.567	0.522	0.456	0.368
November	0.812	0.728	0.647	0.562	0.509	0.449	0.362
December	0.816	0.724	0.648	0.560	0.504	0.450	0.358

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
January	0.350	0.254	0.151	0.105	0.086	0.060	0.026
February	0.340	0.246	0.144	0.099	0.079	0.054	0.020
March	0.334	0.234	0.140	0.096	0.075	0.051	0.016
April	0.311	0.197	0.125	0.079	0.065	0.039	0.005
May	0.303	0.187	0.122	0.075	0.062	0.035	0.001
June	0.298	0.182	0.117	0.075	0.062	0.035	0.000
July	0.297	0.181	0.120	0.079	0.065	0.040	0.005
August	0.294	0.169	0.117	0.078	0.060	0.035	Nil
September	0.285	0.159	0.113	0.075	0.056	0.033	Nil
October	0.275	0.150	0.109	0.071	0.056	0.032	Nil
November	0.264	0.152	0.105	0.072	0.058	0.031	-
December	0.261	0.153	0.104	0.076	0.056	0.026	-

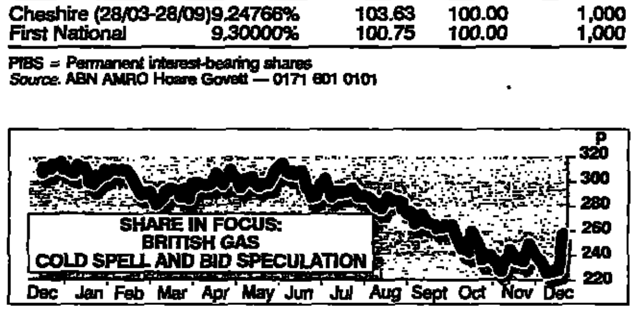
The RI month for disposals by individuals on or after April 6, 1985 (April 1, 1985 for companies) is the month in which the allowable expenditure was incurred, or March 1982 where the expenditure was incurred before that month.

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires	9.375%	100.69	9.301	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.625%	122.24	9.500	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	136.20	9.524	100.20	10,000
Bristol & West	13.375%	140.23	9.518	100.34	1,000
Britannia	13.000%	136.25	9.518	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	126.31	9.576	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	117.02	10.033	100.25	10,000
Halifax	8.750%	94.71	9.238	100.62	50,000
Halifax	12.000%	127.86	9.171	100.28	50,000
Halifax	13.625%	145.94	9.311	100.00	50,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	140.23	9.514	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	116.34	9.228	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.625%	136.98	9.196	100.45	1,000
Northern Rock	12.625%	135.97	9.266	100.14	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	136.00	9.444	100.48	1,000

FLOATING RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Cheshire (28/03-28/09)	9.24766%	103.63	100.00	1,000
First National	9.30000%	100.75	100.00	1,000

PIBS = Permanent interest-bearing shares
Source. ABN AMRO Hoare Govett — 0171 601 0101



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LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Bristol & West 0800 100117	0.70	£15k+	90	Fixed to 30.11.96
Northern Rock 0800 591 500	1.44	to £100k	90	6.00% discount to 1.2.97
Yorkshire 0800 378836	1.59	neg	95	6% disc 1 year, 2% disc 18 mnth
Banks				
Midland 0800 494999	2.64	£100k+	80	4.86% discount for 1 year
National Westminst 0121 234 2000	2.54	£15k+	75	5.20% discount for 12 months

LARGER LOANS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Bristol & West 0800 100117	0.70	£15K+	90	Fixed to 30.11.96
Scarborough 0800 590547	0.49	£11,001 - £100k	95	7% disc 6 mths, 2% 6mth,0.5% 1y
Hinckley & Rugby 0800 774499	0.35	to £150k	70	7.14% discount for 6 months
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01734 510100	0.73	£20-145k	95	7.51%dsc-6 mth 3% dsc-6 mth
Bank of Scotland 0131 243 5735	1.50	to £200k	95	6.49% discount for 6 months

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Brad & Bingley 0800 252 993	1.89	no min/mx	95	fixed to 1.12.96
Bristol & West 0800 100117	2.75	£15k+	95	4.74% discount for 12 months
Skipton 0800 446776	1.49	£25-150k	95	6% disc 5 mnths 1.75% disc 1 year
Banks				
Midland Bank 0800 494999	3.14	£30k+	95	4.36% discount for 1 year
Bnk of Ireland 01734 510100	0.73	£20k-145k	95	7.26% disc 6 mths 3% disc 6 mths

Larger lenders, larger loans and first-time buyers tables supplied by Blay's Guides Ltd. Further information: Blay's Guides, 01753 880482.

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UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

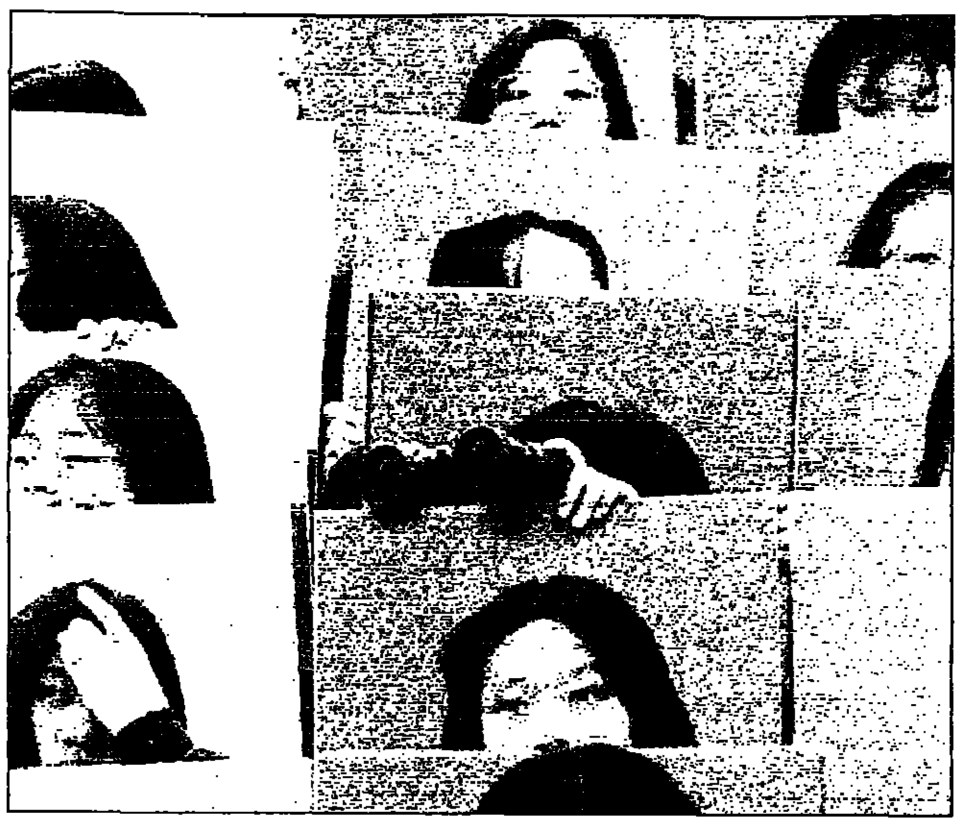
	Bid	Offer	Wkly +/-	Yld %
AEGON LIFE ASSURANCE				
Aegon House, Lanark Square, London E14 9XS 0171 538 8800				
Balanced	505.40	534.90	- 6.00	...
UK Equity	639.10	676.30	- 6.20	...
Property	511.80	541.60	+ 0.40	...
Fixed Interest	355.50	376.20	- 1.30	...
Money	260.70	275.90	+ 0.20	...
International	427.60	452.50	-12.60	...
ABBEY LIFE				
Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth BH8 8AL 01202 292373				
Property Fd Inc	249.80	263.00	+ 0.20	...
-do- Acc	491.80	517.70	+ 0.30	...
Equity Fd Inc	199.90	199.90	- 2.20	...
-do- Acc	260.50	274.30	- 2.90	...
Selective Fd	519.90	547.30	- 2.60	...
Money Fd	394.70	415.50	+ 0.30	...
Prop Fd Ser 4	374.60	394.40	+ 0.20	...
Equity Ser 4	243.70	256.60	- 2.10	...
Man Ser 4	717.20	755	- 2.60	...
Conv Ser 4	341.70	359.70	+ 0.20	...
Money Ser 4	341.40	359.40	+ 0.30	...
Fixed Int Ser 4	373.70	393.40	- 4.30	...
American Ser 4	564.20	593.90	- 7.80	...
High Inc Ser 4	744.80	784.10	- 5.80	...
Indexed Inv Ser 4	224.60	236.50	- 0.60	...
Japan Ser 4	365.30	384.60	- 6.80	...
ALBANY LIFE				
3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AJ 01707 42311				
Equity Fd Acc	1713.20	1803.30	-11.20	...
European Fd Acc	397.30	418.20	- 0.10	...
Fixed Int Acc	549.80	578.70	- 5.90	...
Gtd Money Acc	348.00	366.20	+ 0.40	...
Intl Managed Acc	657.40	692.00	+ 4.80	...
Int Fxd Int Acc	357.90	376.70	- 0.90	...
Japan Fund	268.50	282.60	+ 2.70	...
N American Acc	370.30	389.60	- 4.50	...
Prop Fd Acc	452.00	475.80	- 3.80	...
Multiple Inv Acc	1120.50	1174.40	- 4.00	...
ALLIED DUNBAR ASSURANCE				
Swindon SN1 1EL 01793 514514				
Fxd Int Dep Acc	368.60	409.10	+ 0.60	...
Equity Acc	1566.00	1648.50	+ 1.30	...
Property Acc	606.40	638.40	+ 0.80	...
Far East Acc	326.90	344.20	+ 1.80	...
Managed Capital	573.40	603.60	- 5.10	...
-do- Acc	1202.40	1265.70	+ 0.80	...
Overseas Acc	1034.90	1089.40	+ 1.50	...
Gilt Edged Acc	529.90	557.80	- 2.20	...
Amer Equity Acc	958.60	1009.10	-13.80	...
Amer Man Acc	402.00	423.20	- 5.50	...
Amer Prop Acc	121.30	127.70	- 0.80	...
Distribution Bonds	24.70	26.10	- 0.10	...
AXA EQUITY & LAW LIFE ASSURANCE				
Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Bucks 01494 463463				
Reserve Ser 6	170.80	179.70	- 0.80	...
Balncd Ser 6	789.20	829.60	- 4.10	...
Opportunity Ser 6	180.20	189.60	- 0.50	...
Distribution Ser 6	103.80	109.20	- 0.60	6.84
UK Equities Ser 6	1097.00	1154.70	- 8.30	...
Higher Inc Ser 6	1156.70	1216.50	- 6.50	...
North Amer Ser 6	540.70	569.10	- 5.50	...
Far East Ser 6	596.60	627.90	+ 6.00	...
Europe Ser 6	424.90	447.20	- 0.10	...
Intnl Ser 6	633.30	666.60	- 0.70	...
Property Ser 6	570.00	600.00	+ 1.90	...
Fixed Int Ser 6	478.70	503.80	- 4.00	...
Ind-Lnkd Sec S6	192.30	202.40	- 0.70	...
Gteed Dep Ser 6	310.00	326.30	+ 0.30	...
BARCLAYS LIFE				
252 Romford Road, London E7 9JB 0181 534 5544				
Equity Acc	948.80	998.80	- 2.00	...
-do- Initial	603.40	635.20	- 3.10	...
Gilt Edged Acc	419.70	441.80	- 4.50	...
-do- Initial	269.20	283.40	- 3.80	...
International Acc	439.90	463.10	+ 0.40	...
-do- Initial	280.40	295.20	- 0.60	...
Managed Acc	580.60	611.20	- 1.30	...
-do- Initial	371.40	391.00	- 1.90	...
Money Acc	303.10	319.10	+ 0.20	...
Property Acc	307.30	323.50	+ 0.30	...
-do- Initial	195.80	206.20	...	...
America Acc	340.30	358.30	- 2.20	...
Australia Acc	233.40	245.70	- 2.20	...
Financial Acc	410.80	432.50	- 8.80	...
500 Accum	478.40	503.60	+ 0.70	...
Japan Genl Acc	324.50	341.60	+ 6.70	...
Income Acc	574.00	604.30	- 2.30	...
Leisure Acc	283.20	298.20	- 0.20	...
Special Sits Acc	276.90	291.40	- 1.40	...
Univ Tech Acc	178.60	188.00	- 0.60	...
BLACK HORSE LIFE				
Mountbatten House, Chatham, Kent ME4 4JF 01634 834000				
The Managed Fd	882.49	882.49	- 6.56	...
Income Fund	829.27	872.91	- 5.36	...
Extra Income	758.50	798.43	- 1.35	...
Worldwide Gth	531.29	559.26	- 3.30	...
Balanced Fund	732.49	771.05	- 7.28	...
Smllr Cos Recov	872.98	918.93	- 4.10	...
N Amer & Genrl	419.08	441.14	- 9.57	...
Pacific Basin	436.91	459.91	- 0.77	...
German Growth	249.49	262.63	- 1.41	...
Japan Growth	200.58	211.14	+ 3.69	...
The UK Gilt Fd	234.79	247.15	- 2.57	...
Contl Euro Gth	148.03	155.83	- 1.16	...
Property Fund	411.84	433.52	+ 0.02	...
Fixed Interest	343.35	361.43	- 3.12	...
Cash Fund	294.46	309.96	- 0.06	...
Managed Inv	531.19	559.14	- 4.26	...
Nth Amer Recov	287.50	302.64	- 2.95	...
Abtrust Fund				
Managed Gth	524.71	552.33	+ 0.59	...
BRITANNIA LIFE ASSURANCE				
PO Box 37, Greenock, Renfrewshire 01475 868000				
Measured Perf	174.10	184.20	- 1.00	...
Performance Plus	183.00	193.60	- 4.50	...
With Profit Perf	178.00	189.30	+ 0.10	...
UK Opportunity	207.60	219.80	- 1.00	...
Euro Opportunity	227.80	241.00	- 5.20	...
North Amer Opp	191.20	202.30	+ 0.80	...
Far East Opp	197.30	208.70	- 2.80	...
Gwth Prop Ser 1	158.70	167.00	...	...
Gth Prop Ser 2	194.10	205.30	+ 0.30	...
Fixed Int	211.80	224.10	- 0.60	...
Cash	163.80	173.30	+ 0.20	6.49
Overseas	210.90	223.10	- 5.10	...
Formerly LAS				
Managed Fund	370.00	389.50	- 2.10	...
UK Equity	640.60	674.40	- 4.60	...
Property	265.90	279.90	+ 6.00	...
Money Market	262.00	275.80	+ 0.20	...
Fixed Interest	315.80	332.50	- 3.30	...
Japan	373.90	393.60	- 2.70	...
North America	178.40	187.80	+ 0.30	...
International	342.80	360.90	+ 2.70	...
European	299.00	314.80	- 4.90	...
Far East	143.50	151.10	+ 0.60	...
CANADA LIFE				
2-6 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA 01707 51122				
Equity Growth 1	277.80	...	...	...
Managed	362.00	381.10	- 2.20	...
Property	241.40	254.20	...	...
Gilt & Fxd Int	260.70	274.50	- 1.40	...
Equity	409.50	431.10	- 3.60	...
Cash	224.10	235.90	+ 0.10	...
CLife Euro Mgd	414.60	436.50	- 5.60	...
CLife Intl Fd	386.00	406.40	- 1.90	...
Managed Fund	797.40	839.40	...	...
Property Fund	551.00	580.00	...	...
Equity Fund	1051.80	1107.20	...	...
Gilt Edged Fd	670.70	706.00	...	...
Deposit Fund	345.30	363.50	...	...
Investment Fd	448.10	470.50	...	...
International	601.80	633.50	...	...
CITY OF WESTMINSTER ASSURANCE				
Sentry House, 500 Avebury Blvd, Milton Keynes MK9 2NU. 01908 606101				
Property Fund	161.30	169.80	...	...
Managed Fund	690.40	726.80	-12.20	...
Equity Fund	400.90	421.90	- 7.00	...
CLERICAL MEDICAL/FIDELITY INVESTMENTS				
Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH, 0117 9290566				
Assurance Funds				
Sapphire Mixed	318.50	335.30	+ 0.40	...
Ruby	188.00	198.00	- 0.20	...
Emerald	154.40	162.60	- 0.70	...
Equity	368.10	387.50	- 1.30	...
Property	231.20	243.40	+ 0.50	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	221.40	233.10	- 1.90	...
Indexed Secs	179.20	188.70	- 0.80	...
Cash	195.60	206.00	+ 0.30	...
Nth American	277.60	292.30	- 1.40	...
Far East	346.00	364.30	+ 4.90	...
International	266.30	280.40	- 2.50	...
Special Sits	383.20	403.40	- 1.30	...
Intl Income	325.00	342.20	- 1.00	...
American Inc	228.90	241.00	- 0.70	...
European	363.70	382.90	+ 2.90	...
Japanese	141.30	148.80	+ 1.10	...
SE Asia	386.60	407.00	+ 5.90	...
With Profits Reg	176.00	185.30	+ 0.30	...
-do- Spec	176.00	185.30	+ 0.30	...
Flexible Retirement Plans Funds				
Mixed	366.40	385.70	- 0.20	
Equity	444.90	468.40	- 0.60	...
Property	212.80	224.00	+ 0.40	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	281.60	296.50	- 2.20	...
Index Linked	189.90	199.90	- 0.80	...
Cash	264.90	278.90	+ 0.30	...
Nth American	344.80	363.00	- 0.50	...
Far East Acc	328.10	345.40	+ 3.50	...
International Acc	336.90	354.70	+ 2.40	...
Special Sits	573.10	603.30	- 5.50	...
European Flex	509.10	535.90	+ 1.80	...
COLONIAL MUTUAL GROUP				
Colonial Mutual House, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4YY. 01634 890 000				
(Units): Key:	228.57	...	...	...
-do- Pacemaker:	338.97	...	...	...
-do- Cash	210.97	222.07	+ 0.12	...
-do- Equity	592.82	624.02	- 1.73	...
-do- Fxd Int	389.29	409.78	- 5.20	...
-do- Managed	426.04	448.46	- 1.47	...
-do- Property	280.365	295.42	- 2.93	...
(Pens): Cash Cap	211.89	223.05	- 0.08	...
-do- Cash Inv	321.75	338.70	+ 0.32	...
-do- Equity Cap	£15.49	£16.30	- 9.12	...
-do- Equity Inv	£23.53	£24.76	-12.40	...
-do- Fixed Cap	421.14	443.32	- 5.28	...
-do- Fixed Inv	639.49	673.16	+ 7.04	...
-do- Index Cap	209.05	220.06	- 1.20	...
-do- Index Inv	317.44	334.16	- 1.63	...
-do- Mngd Cap	624.06	656.91	- 3.62	...
-do- Mngd Inv	947.62	997.51	- 4.90	...
COMMERCIAL UNION				
St Helen's, 1 Undershaft, EC3 0171 283 7500				
Var Ann Acc (5) 1	794.50	...	-12.10	...
Var Ann (5) 1	69.90	...	- 1.52	...
Prime: Managed	439.80	463.00	- 0.60	...
Prime: UK Equity	540.90	569.40	- 2.10	...
Prime: Int Equity	322.60	339.60	- 2.50	...
Prime: Property	255.00	268.50	- 1.00	...
Prime: Fxd Int	251.70	265.00	- 2.30	...
Prime: Index-Lnk	180.40	189.90	- 1.10	...
Prime: Cash	214.40	225.70	+ 0.10	...
CONFEDERATION LIFE				
Lytton Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2NN 01438 744840				
Managed Fund	1212.10	1275.80	+ 0.10	...
Equity Fund	1746.80	1838.70	-15.00	...
CROWN FINANCIAL				
Crown House, Woking GU21 1XW 01483 715033				
Life Mangd Acc	643.60	677.40	- 9.10	...
Life Fxd Int Acc	401.40	422.50	- 1.60	...
Life Equity Acc	920.90	969.30	-11.50	...
Life Money Acc	312.40	328.80	+ 0.20	...
Life Inv Tst Acc	842.10	886.40	-11.00	...
Life Intl Acc	532.00	559.90	-16.90	...
Life High Inc Acc	869.70	915.40	- 0.50	...
Life Property Acc	254.40	267.70	- 0.60	...
Crown Brit Inv A	1416.60	...	...	...
Brewin Equity	791.50	833.10	-11.90	...
EAGLE STAR LIFE ASSURANCE				
Bath Road, Cheltenham, Gloucester GL53 7LQ. 01242 221311				
Secure Fund	183.00	192.70	+ 0.20	...
Managed Fund	263.40	277.30	+ 0.30	...
-do- Series 2	174.60	183.80	+ 0.20	...
Adventurous Fd	220.40	232.10	+ 1.30	...
-do- Series 2	170.80	179.80	+ 1.00	...
Equity Mngd Fd	262.70	276.60	+ 0.70	...
-do- Series 2	176.30	185.60	+ 0.50	...
UK Pref Fxd Int	155.70	164.00	- 1.60	...
UK Equity Fund	184.80	194.60	...	...
Property Fund	121.70	128.20	+ 0.10	...
Envrnmntl Opps	177.60	187.00	- 0.50	...
Euro Fund	204.40	215.20	...	...
North Amer Fd	229.70	241.80	- 1.00	...
Oriental Ops	236.60	249.10	+ 1.50	...
Japanese Fund	125.60	132.30	+ 1.80	...
Bri & West Life	130.30	137.20	+ 0.20	...
Bri & West Pen	150.10	158.00	- 0.20	...
EAGLE STAR/MIDLAND				
60 St Mary Axe, London EC3. 0171 929 1111				
Eagle/Mid Uts	299.40	310.20	- 1.80	2.95
FRIENDS' PROVIDENT				
Castle Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SH 01722 413366				
Managed	336.30	354.00	- 0.20	...
UK Equity	450.80	474.60	- 0.40	...
Stewardship	390.30	410.90	+ 0.30	...
Overseas Equity	315.10	331.70	+ 0.50	...
North American	173.70	182.90	- 1.80	...
Pacific Basin	173.30	182.50	+ 1.10	...
European	256.60	270.20	+ 1.10	...
Property	182.50	192.20	+ 0.30	...
Fixed Interest	257.00	270.60	- 2.50	...
Index Linked	178.70	188.20	- 0.90	...
Cash	209.00	220.10	+ 0.20	...
FP Life Assurance ex NM				
Fixed Interest	584.30	615.00	- 4.00	...
Managed	753.70	793.30	- 1.70	...
Deposit	355.50	374.20	+ 0.40	...
Property	477.10	502.20	+ 0.90	...
American	489.10	514.80	- 5.20	...
Australian	577.30	607.60	- 3.80	...
European	622.00	654.70	+ 3.10	...
Income Acc	817.90	860.90	- 1.90	...
-do- Dist	464.80	489.30	+ 1.50	5.07
International	340.70	358.60	+ 0.40	...
Japan Smaller	458.90	483.00	- 1.60	...
Singapore & Mal	402.40	423.50	+ 4.60	...
Smaller Cos	444.80	468.20	- 2.30	...
Tokyo Fund	661.50	696.30	+ 8.30	...
UK Equity	634.50	667.80	- 2.40	...
CCM Mangd Mg	826.00	869.40	- 4.90	...
GT UNIT MANAGERS LTD				
Alban Gate, 14th Flr, 125 London Wall, Lond EC2Y 5AS. 0171 710 4567				
GT Plan Far East	329.50	346.90	- 2.20	...
GT Plan Wwide	516.60	543.80	- 0.60	...
GAN LIFE & PENSIONS				
Gan House, Harlow, Essex CM20 2EW. 01279 626262				
Portfolio Acc	750.60	750.60	+ 1.40	...
-do- Inv A	790.50	790.10	- 1.40	...
UK Equity	453.50	477.50	- 1.00	...
Gilt Plus	217.50	229.10	- 1.70	...
Managed	336.00	353.80	+ 0.70	...
GENERAL ACCIDENT				
2 Rougier St, York YO1 1HR. 01904 628982				
Managed	231.10	243.20	- 0.20	...
Unitised Profit	147.10	154.80	+ 0.20	...
UK Equity	320.70	337.50	- 0.60	...
Fixed Int	210.30	221.30	- 2.50	...
Index-Linked	175.30	184.50	- 1.10	...
Cash Deposit	180.30	190.30	+ 0.10	...
Property	183.10	192.70	+ 0.90	...
International	187.60	197.30	- 0.40	...
American	193.60	203.70	- 1.00	...
Japan	248.50	261.50	+ 2.40	...
Japan Smllr Cos	254.40	267.70	+ 2.30	...
European	199.00	209.40	...	...
Pacific Fund	298.90	314.50	- 1.90	...
Conv Life	138.40	145.50	- 0.30	...
GUARDIAN ROYAL EXCHANGE				
Royal Exchange London EC3. 0171 283 7101				
Ass Prop Bds	820.50	865.10	...	...
Managed Initial	507.50	534.20	+ 3.40	...
-do- Acc	741.00	780.00	+ 5.40	...
Equity Initial	775.60	816.40	+ 5.70	...
-do- Acc	1132.40	1192.00	+ 8.90	...
Fixed Int Initial	470.80	495.60	- 5.90	...
-do- Acc	687.40	723.60	- 8.30	...
Intl Initial	496.80	523.00	- 1.40	...
-do- Acc	725.40	763.60	- 2.40	...
Nth Amer Initial	220.30	231.90	+ 0.50	...
-do- Acc	292.70	308.10	+ 0.80	...
Pacific Initial	246.20	259.20	+ 2.90	...
-do- Acc	324.10	341.20	+ 4.00	...
Property Initial	178.20	187.60	...	...
-do- Acc	259.90	273.50	...	
Index-Lnkd Intl	167.10	175.90	- 1.30	...
-do- Acc	222.00	233.70	- 1.70	...
Deposit Initial	201.20	211.80	+ 0.10	...
-do- Acc	293.80	309.20	+ 0.20	...
Euro Initial	115.30	121.30	- 0.60	...
-do- Acc	141.60	149.00	+ 0.90	...
HALIFAX LIFE LTD				
PO Box 285, York, YO1 1YB 01904 611110				
Life Funds				
Foundation	27.65	29.11	+ 0.02	...
Balanced	28.12	29.60	+ 0.08	...
Opportunity	28.62	30.13	+ 0.04	...
Deposit	24.57	25.87	- 0.02	...
Pension Funds				
Foundation	28.29	29.78	- 0.01	...
Balanced	28.43	29.93	- 0.03	
Opportunity	29.10	30.63	- 0.07	...
Deposit	24.90	26.21	+ 0.02	...
HAMBRO ASSURED				
Harbour House, Portway, Preston, Lancs PR2 2PR. 01772 840000				
Managed	184.50	194.20	- 0.50	...
-do- Pens	231.60	243.70	- 0.70	...
UK Equity	192.00	202.10	+ 0.10	...
-do- Pens	225.10	236.90	...	...
International	161.40	169.80	- 0.90	...
-do- Pens	177.60	186.90	- 1.20	...
Deposit	144.60	152.20	+ 0.10	...
-do- Pens	173.50	182.60	+ 0.20	...
HENDERSON ADMINISTRATION				
3 Finsbury Avenue, London EC2M 2PA 0171 638 5757				
UK Equity Fd	380.20	404.50	- 2.50	...
North America	419.00	445.80	- 4.00	...
Far East Fund	596.30	634.40	+ 2.40	...
Global Managed	504.70	537.00	- 2.80	...
Deposit Fund	238.10	250.70	+ 0.10	...
Prime Residential	138.00	145.30	- 1.10	...
European Fund	285.10	303.30	+ 0.10	...
Fixed Interest	67.40	71.70	...	...
HILL SAMUEL LIFE				
NLA Tower, Addiscombe Road, Croydon 0181 686 4355				
Security Fund	584.20	618.30	- 1.90	...
British Fund	603.70	638.90	+ 0.60	...
International	607.40	642.80	+ 4.20	...
Dollar Fund	478.10	506.00	+ 2.90	...
Capital Fund	542.30	573.90	+ 1.50	
Income Fund	772.60	817.60	- 3.10	...
Property Series A	469.10	496.50		4.50
Property Units	775.70	814.50	...	...
Financial Fund	686.30	726.30	- 9.00	...
Managed Ser A	602.30	637.40	+ 0.50	
Managed Units	1082.20	1139.20	+ 1.00	...
High Yield Fund	702.10	743.00	+ 1.50	...
Money Series A	300.90	318.50	+ 0.40	...
Money Units	400.30	421.40	+ 0.20	
Equity Fund	690.70	730.90	+ 1.40	...
Fixed Interest	397.20	420.40	- 4.70	
Indexed Secs	198.90	210.40	- 1.10	...
European Fund	822.60	870.50	- 6.50	...
Natural Res	319.00	337.60	- 2.40	...
Far East Fund	688.20	728.30	+11.30	...
Smaller Cos	540.70	572.20	- 5.30	...
Special Sits	524.20	559.00	- 5.50	...
Man Currency	278.50	294.50	+ 0.80	...
Japanese Tech	323.40	342.30	- 0.20	...
US Smaller Cos	343.10	363.10	- 4.70	...
Formerly Target Life Assurance Co Ltd				
Deposit	258.80	272.50	+ 0.20	...
Financial Ser 1	55.30	59.10	- 0.80	...
Fixed Interest	354.60	373.40	- 4.50	...
Gold	89.70	94.50	+ 0.60	...
Managed	670.00	705.30	- 0.70	...
Mngd Growth	213.10	224.40	- 0.60	...
Mngd Opp	224.60	236.50	- 0.70	...
Property	329.40	346.70	...	...
Residential Prop	104.00	109.60	...	...
TSB American	247.00	260.10	+ 2.40	...
TSB Brit Gwth	978.10	1029.70	- 1.20	...
TSB European	295.90	311.60	+ 2.70	...
TSB Income	420.10	442.30	+ 1.40	...
TSB Intl	465.50	490.10	+ 2.70	...
TSB Intl Inc	321.30	338.30	+ 0.30	...
TSB Pacific	424.10	446.50	+ 6.00	...
TSB Prem Inc	274.60	286.90	- 2.00	...
IRISH LIFE ASSURANCE				
Irish Life Centre, Victoria Street, St Albans, Herts AL1 3TF. 01727 48181				
Global Managed	630.90	664.10	- 5.90	...
Global Property	311.50	327.90	...	...
Global Fixed Int	558.90	588.30	- 3.90	...
Global Equity	681.40	717.30	- 7.30	...
Global Cash	222.90	234.50	+ 0.20	...
LAURENTIAN LIFE				
Barnwood, Gloucester GL4 7RZ 01452 371371				
Property	499.40	525.60	- 0.60	...
Managed	459.80	483.90	...	...
American	496.20	522.30	- 1.80	...
UK Equity Fd	502.70	529.10	...	...
Japan	222.30	233.90	+ 3.00	...
Index-Lkd	195.70	205.90	- 1.30	...
High Yield	939.10	988.50	+ 3.30	...
Money	420.00	442.10	+ 0.40	...
International	434.70	457.50	+ 1.40	...
Henderson Active	225.70	237.50	- 1.80	...
Perpetual Active	363.40	382.50	- 0.30	...
Growth Acc	717.00	755.30	+ 0.80	...
Gilt Edged	466.00	490.50	- 3.80	...
European	169.50	178.40	+ 0.70	...
Far East	217.40	229.20	+ 2.30	
LEGAL & GENERAL UNIT ASSURANCE				
2 Montefiore Road, Hove, Sussex BN3 1SE 01273 824000				
B Soc Lnkd Init	134.80	141.90	...	
-do- Acc	192.70	202.90	+ 0.10	...
Brit Opps Int	159.40	167.80	- 0.60	...
-do- Acc	203.90	214.70	- 0.70	...
Cash Initial	169.30	178.20	+ 0.30	...
-do- Acc	300.30	316.20	+ 0.40	...
Equity Initial	721.70	759.70	- 0.90	...
-do- Acc	1280.20	1347.60	- 1.30	...
Fixed Initial	363.70	382.90	- 2.60	...
-do- Acc	645.10	679.10	- 4.70	...
Index-Lnkd Gilt	138.00	145.30	- 1.00	...
-do- Acc	208.90	219.90	- 1.40	...
Intl Initial	342.60	360.70	+ 1.80	...
-do- Acc	598.40	629.90	- 3.10	...
Managed Initial	510.80	537.70	+ 0.10	...
-do- Acc	906.10	953.80	+ 0.20	...
Property Initial	218.40	229.90	- 0.40	...
-do- Acc	387.50	407.90	- 0.60	...
LINCOLN NATIONAL				
1 Olympic Way, Wembley, Middx HA9 0NB 0181 902 8876				
Equity Units 1	£140.93	...	- 1.47	
Property Units 1	£26.78	...	- 1.00	...
Bal Bd Exec Unit	71.41	75.16	- 0.65	...
2nd Equity Acc	676.40	712.00	-10.70	...
2nd High Inc Ac	652.10	686.40	- 8.30	...
2nd Property Acc	244.60	257.50	- 0.90	...
2nd Mngd 2 Acc	194.10	204.30	+ 0.90	...
2nd Mngd 3 Acc	498.90	525.10	- 4.50	...
2nd Mngd 4 Acc	250.00	263.20	- 1.20	...
2nd Deposit Acc	295.30	310.80	+ 0.10	...
2nd Gilt Acc	331.00	348.40	- 0.50	...
2nd Amer Acc	808.00	850.50	-20.20	...
2nd Intl Mny Acc	277.70	292.30	+ 1.00	...
2nd Index Acc	219.20	230.80	- 0.30	...
2nd Far East Acc	455.50	479.50	- 3.10	...
2nd Global Acc	186.30	196.10	- 2.20	...
2nd Euro Acc	172.30	181.30	- 1.90	...
2nd Japan Acc	191.80	201.90	- 0.80	...
2nd Int Cr Bd Acc	176.60	185.90	+ 2.10	...
2nd Cap Gth Acc	135.90	143.00	- 1.20	...
LONDON LIFE				
100 Temple Street, Bristol, BS1 6EA 0117 9279179				
Equity 1	979.20	...	+ 6.20	...
Fixed Interest 1	462.00	...	- 4.00	...
Property 1	429.20	...	- 1.00	...
Deposit 1	305.60	...	+ 0.20	...
Mixed 1	650.80	...	+ 2.90	...
Indexed Stock 1	227.70	...	- 0.60	...
International 1	324.10	...	+ 2.40	...
Equity A 1	226.90	...	+ 1.50	...
Fixed Int A 1	204.70	...	- 1.80	...
Property A 1	188.40	...	- 0.40	...
Deposit A 1	179.40	...	+ 0.10	...
Mixed A 1	213.60	...	+ 1.00	...
Index Stock A 1	178.10	...	- 0.50	...
International A 1	202.20	...	+ 1.50	...
Equity P 1	811.80	...	+ 6.20	...
Fixed Int P 1	616.00	...	- 5.00	...
Property P 1	334.90	...	+ 0.60	...
Deposit P 1	364.20	...	+ 0.40	...
Mixed P 1	999.70	...	+ 3.60	...
Index Stock P 1	260.90	...	- 1.40	
International P 1	381.40	...	+ 3.60	
LONDON & MANCHESTER ASSURANCE				
Winslade Park, Exeter EX5 1DS. 01392 282456				
Inv Trust Cap 1	597.50	...	- 3.20	...
-do- Acc 1	1048.10	...	- 4.60	...
Property Cap 1	144.50	...	...	...
-do- Acc 1	243.00	...	+ 0.10	...
Fxd Interest Cap 1	201.80	...	- 2.10	...
-do- Acc 1	341.60	...	- 3.30	...
Equity Cap 1	342.10	...	- 3.50	...
-do- Acc 1	587.90	...	- 5.40	...
Internatl Cap 1	243.10	...	- 1.30	...
-do- Acc 1	413.40	...	- 1.90	...
Gtd Deposit Cap 1	163.20	...	...	
-do- Acc 1	273.40	...	+ 0.10	7.20
Flexible Cap 1	362.10	...	- 3.10	...
-do- Acc 1	620.30	...	- 4.70	...
Moneymaker Fd 1	480.20	...	- 4.00	...
Capital Growth 1	1920.70	...	-15.80	...
M & G				
Victoria Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1FB 01245 266266				
Amer Bond Acc	498.00	523.00	- 6.80	...
Amer Rec Bond	549.30	576.90	- 5.50	...
Am Smlr Cos Bd	265.10	278.50	- 1.90	...
Australasia Bd	247.20	259.70	+ 0.60	...
Commodity Bond	352.60	370.30	- 2.00	...
Deposit Bond Acc	376.10	395.00	+ 0.30	...
Equity Bond Acc	1624.60	1705.90	- 3.90	...
European Bd Acc	418.30	439.30	- 1.80	...
Extra Yld Bd Acc	812.40	853.10	+ 3.90	...
Far East Bd Acc	327.30	343.80	+ 4.30	...
Gilt Bond Acc	476.50	500.40	- 5.20	...
Gold Bond Acc	162.50	170.80	+ 1.40	...
High Yield Bond	355.60	373.50	- 2.20	...
Index-Lnk Gt Bd	222.00	233.20	- 0.70	...
International Bd	824.30	865.60	- 1.70	...
Japan Bond Acc	260.50	273.60	+ 4.50	...
Japan Sm Cos Ac	242.70	254.90	+ 1.60	...
Managed Bonds	946.20	993.60	- 1.20	...
Prop Bond Acc	358.50	376.50	+ 0.20	
Rec Bond Acc	822.70	863.90	- 4.50	...
MGM ASSURANCE				
MGM House, Heene Road, Worthing BN11 2DY. 01903 204631				
UK Equity	244.60	257.50	- 3.30	...
UK Equity Acc	357.80	376.70	- 4.60	...
Special Sits	99.60	104.90	- 0.90	...
Special Sits Acc	145.80	153.50	- 1.30	...
North American	209.80	220.90	- 1.60	...
N American Acc	307.10	323.30	- 2.00	...
Pacific Basin	372.40	392.00	+ 4.50	...
Pacific Basin Acc	545.00	573.70	+ 6.90	...
Fixed Interest	295.70	311.30	- 2.00	...
Fixed Interest Acc	433.30	456.20	- 3.60	...
Property	178.90	188.41	...	...
Property Acc	262.10	275.90	+ 0.20	...
Deposit	153.50	161.60	...	...
Deposit Acc	224.90	236.80	+ 0.20	...
Managed	270.20	292.90	- 2.10	...
Managed Acc	375.20	395.00	- 2.50	...
MERCHANT INVESTORS				
St Bartholomews House, Lewins Mead Bristol BS1 2NH 0117 9266 366				
Property	424.20	446.50	- 2.10	
UK Equity	401.80	422.90	- 4.00	...
Gilt Edged	628.60	661.80	- 2.30	...
Interest Fund	409.40	430.90	+ 1.70	...
Managed Fd	522.60	550.30	- 4.00	...
Intl Equity	638.80	672.40	- 2.40	...
North American	245.70	258.60	+ 0.60	...
Far East	472.30	497.10	+ 4.50	...
Intl Currency	265.00	278.90	...	...
NPI				
48 Gracechurch Street, London EC3P 3HH 0171 623 4200				
Managed	538.80	567.10	- 0.60	
UK Equity	688.80	725.00	- 3.70	...
Overseas Equity	533.10	561.10	+ 3.20	...
Americas	482.10	507.40	+ 2.20	...
Far East	604.80	636.60	+10.20	...
Property	217.00	228.40	- 0.10	...
Fixed Interest	423.70	445.90	- 3.80	
Indexed Gilt	247.60	260.60	- 1.40	...
Deposit	225.90	237.70	+ 0.10	...
NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY - Ex NUAM Funds				
PO Box 140, Norwich NR3 1PP 01603 622200				
Managed Fund	1595.00	1678.90	- 0.80	...
Equity Fund	3512.00	3696.80	- 5.20	...
Property Fd	594.30	625.60	- 0.40	...
Fixed Int Fd	652.40	686.70	- 7.10	...
Deposit Fund	365.30	384.50	+ 0.30	...
Intl Fund	271.80	286.10	+ 0.90	...
OLD MUTUAL				
2 Bartley Way, Hook, Hants RG27 9XA 01256 768888				
Equity Fund Acc	327.70	345.70	+ 0.20	...
Fxd Interest Acc	260.70	275.00	- 3.20	...
International Acc	267.20	281.90	+ 3.20	...
Managed Acc	237.30	250.40	+ 0.70	...
Property Acc	219.30	231.40	- 0.30	...
Money Acc	161.20	170.10	+ 0.20	...
Spec Mkt Acc	235.10	248.00	+ 5.60	...
Japan Equity Acc	124.90	131.80	+ 3.20	...
N Amer Acc	168.80	178.10	- 3.80	...
Pacific Acc	163.00	172.00	+ 3.50	...
European Acc	187.00	197.30	+ 2.70	...
PEARL ASSURANCE				
The Pearl Centre, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6FY. 01733 470 470				
Inv Prop Dist	147.10	154.90	...	...
Prop Acc (Gross)	329.90	347.30	+ 0.10	...
Inv Equity	1323.80	1393.50	-14.70	...
Inv Managed	931.40	980.50	- 5.80	...
Ret Managed	1058.40	1114.20	- 5.40	...
PROVIDENT MUTUAL				
Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2ST 01438 732000				
Managed Ord	528.50	556.30	- 1.60	...
Managed Initial	344.40	362.50	+ 0.70	...
Equity Ord	817.50	860.50	+ 4.00	...
Equity Init	532.80	560.80	+ 2.20	...
I-Linked Gilt Ord	213.10	224.30	- 1.50	...
I-Linked Gilt Init	145.10	152.70	- 1.10	...
Oseas Equity Ord	415.50	437.40	+ 1.40	...
Oseas Equity Init	270.80	285.10	+ 0.80	...
Property Ord	279.30	294.00	+ 0.20	...
Property Init	182.00	191.60	...	...
Fixed Int Ord	306.20	322.30	- 3.20	...
Fixed Int Init	199.60	210.10	- 2.20	...
Deposit Ord	215.30	226.60	- 0.20	...
Deposit Initial	140.30	147.70	...	...
PRUDENTIAL				
Holborn Bars, London EC1N 2NH 0171 405 9222				
Managed	381.50	397.40	- 4.40	...
PRUDENTIAL INDIVIDUAL LIFE FDS				
1 Stephen Street, London W1P 2AP 0171 548 3278				
Managed Fund	893.80	940.90	- 1.70	...
Equity Fund	1716.50	1806.90	- 9.60	...
Intl Fund	709.10	746.50	+ 3.50	...
Fixed Interest	613.50	645.80	- 5.70	...
Property Fund	492.40	518.40	...	...
Cash Fund	380.40	400.50	+ 0.20	...
Pacific Basin	397.80	418.80	+ 5.30	...
N American Fd	324.00	341.10	- 1.10	...
Euro Fund	306.30	322.50	+ 0.80	...
Balanced Fund	174.80	184.10	- 0.50	...
Strategic Fund	186.90	196.80	- 0.20	...
ROYAL HERITAGE LIFE ASSURANCE				
Peterborough Business Park, Peterborough PE2 6GG. 01733 390000				
Mult Grow (45) 1	814.80	...	...	...
-do- Acc	475.80	500.80	...	...
Op Prop	507.10	533.70	+ 0.20	...
Op Equity	1100.10	1157.90	-11.30	...
Op High Yield	644.10	677.90	- 4.60	...
Op Managed	901.20	948.60	- 5.60	...
Op Deposit	409.40	430.90	...	...
Inc Gth	333.20	350.70	- 2.30	...
Japan Smlr	250	263.10	+ 1.70	...
Managed Gth	289.10	304.30	- 0.40	...
Gilt	88.10	92.70	- 0.70	...
British	403.70	424.90	- 3.20	...
Global Bond	128.40	135.10	- 0.20	...
Global Inc & Gth	188.20	198.10	+ 0.90	...
Gold Share	87.80	92.40	+ 0.10	...
High Income	311.50	327.80	- 1.10	...
Income	480.10	505.30	- 3.90	...
Japan	428.10	450.60	+ 7.20	...
UK Smlr Cos	389.20	409.60	+ 4.00	...
Mngd Growth	508.20	534.90	- 1.30	...
ROYAL LIFE INSURANCE				
New Hall Place, Liverpool L69 3HS 0151 239 3000				
Royal Shield Fd	1074.50	1137	- 6.30	...
Royal Life Unit Linked				
Managed Fund	424.50	446.80	- 2.40	...
Equity Fund	606.60	638.50	- 4.60	...
Property Fund	336.30	353.90	+ 1.30	...
International	527.70	555.40	- 0.40	...
Pacific Basin	284.60	299.50	+ 2.90	...
United States	319.30	336.10	- 2.50	...
Gilt Fund	399.80	420.80	- 2.50	...
SAVE & PROSPER				
16-22 Western Road, Romford, Essex RM1 3LB. 01708 766966				
Bal Inv Fund	837.40	880.20	- 1.90	2.29
Deposit Fund (2)	390.70	413.50	+ 0.30	7.05
Gilt Fund	567.00	600.00	- 4.80	7.93
Global Equity Fd	255.40	270.30	+ 0.50	
Property Fund (4n)	116.40	123.20	...	7.17
AG Bond Fund	156.60	165.80	- 0.40	...
SCOTTISH AMICABLE				
150 St Vincent Street, Glasgow 0141 248 2323				
Equity	663.50	698.50	- 4.20	...
Fixed Interest	404.20	425.50	- 4.90	...
Index-Linked	207.60	218.60	- 1.50	...
International	504.30	530.90	+ 0.50	...
Property	301.40	317.30	+ 0.40	...
Cash	240.00	252.70	+ 0.10	...
Managed	517.80	545.10	- 2.00	...
Cap Gteed Bd	128.60	135.40	- 1.10	...
SCOTTISH EQUITABLE				
28 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YF 0131 556 9101				
Cash	189.139	199.094	+ 0.14	...
Index-Linked	172.30	181.40	- 1.10	...
Fixed Interest	197.10	207.60	- 2.20	...
Mixed	284.30	299.40	- 1.50	...
UK Equity	270.80	285.10	- 2.00	...
International	283.70	298.80	- 0.20	...
American	312.10	328.60	- 3.90	...
Japan	241.90	254.70	+ 3.90	...
European	289.30	304.60	- 2.10	...
Pacific	364.00	384.00	+ 2.20	...
Technology	462.40	486.80	- 3.30	...
Frgn Bd/Crrcy	255.20	268.80	+ 0.80	...
SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS				
19 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YE 0131 225 2211				
Property	224.70	236.70	+ 0.30	...
UK Equity	399.90	421.10	+ 3.70	...
American	297.00	312.80	- 2.90	...
Pacific	374.00	393.80	+ 2.80	...
European	525.10	552.80	+ 3.90	...
International	347.50	365.90	+ 1.00	...
Fixed Interest	257.20	270.90	- 2.20	...
Index Linked	209.80	221.00	- 1.00	...
Deposit	203.30	214.10	+ 0.20	...
Managed	318.40	335.20	+ 1.80	...
Worldwide	133.30	140.50	+ 0.30	...
Pen Worldwide	144.10	151.70	+ 0.10	...
SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE				
109 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5HN 0141 248 6321				
Flex Fund (35)	1864.50	1922.20	...	...
Safety Fund	256.50	270.10	- 1.50	...
Growth Fund	257.10	270.70	- 0.40	...
Opportunity Fd	257.80	271.40	- 0.30	...
Cash Fund	181.30	190.90	+ 0.10	...
European Fund	380.80	400.90	+ 2.10	...
Gilts & Fxd Int	219.60	231.20	- 2.70	...
Index-Linked Fd	192.80	203.00	- 1.80	...
International Fd	313.80	330.40	+ 2.10	...
North American	277.20	291.80	- 0.60	...
Property Fund	128.70	135.50	- 0.10	...
UK Equity	274.70	289.20	- 1.50	...
UK Smaller	266.50	280.60	- 0.90	...
SCOTTISH PROVIDENT				
6 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YA 0131 556 9181				
Mixed	295.20	310.90	- 1.70	...
Equity	312.90	329.50	- 2.40	...
International	289.00	304.30	- 0.10	...
Property	234.00	246.50	...	...
Fixed Interest	237.70	250.30	- 1.20	...
Index Linked	192.00	202.30	- 0.80	...
Cash	193.90	204.20	+ 0.10	...
Formerly Prolific				
Bal Gwth Mngd	878.90	915.00	- 5.10	...
Cash Fund	352.50	371.50	+ 0.20	...
Property Fund	300.50	316.70	+ 0.40	...
Equity Fund	993.10	1056.50	- 1.70	...
Fxd Interest Fund	504.60	531.80	- 1.10	...
International	414.40	440.90	+ 0.10	...
High Income	782.70	832.70	- 9.70	...
Far East	595.30	633.40	+ 7.30	...
North American	647.20	688.60	- 7.00	...
Special Sits	721.70	767.80	- 3.50	...
Technology	936.20	996.00	-20.50	...
Extra Income Fd	432.10	459.70	- 3.70	...
Gilt Fund	515.50	548.50	- 0.10	...
European	163.50	174.00	- 0.10	...
Adventurous Mg	250.10	263.30	- 0.90	...
Secure Mgd	160.50	169.20	+ 0.50	...
Equity Inc Dist	126.00	132.80	- 2.20	4.45
Managed Dist	116.90	123.20	- 0.60	5.03
SCOTTISH WIDOWS				
PO Box 902, Edinburgh EH16 5BU 0131 655 6000				
Inv Pol 1	1072.80	1072.80	+ 1.60	...
Inv Pol 2	972.40	1023.70	+ 1.60	...
Inv Pol 3	924.60	973.40	+ 1.50	...
Inv Cash	329.00	346.40	+ 0.20	...
Mixed Fund	502.20	528.90	- 2.40	...
Equity Fund	603.50	635.10	- 2.80	...
Property Fund	246.10	259.20	...	...
International Fd	543.90	572.60	- 2.80	...
Fixed Interest Fd	412.90	434.70	- 2.90	...
Indexed Stock Fd	211.30	222.50	- 0.80	...
Cash Fund	237.80	250.40	+ 0.10	...
SKANDIA LIFE				
Skandia House, Portland Terrace, Southampton SO9 7BX 01703 334411				
Managed Acc	421.60	443.70	- 2.20	...
Equity Acc	511.20	538.10	- 2.90	...
International Acc	376.80	396.60	+ 3.30	...
Property	231.80	243.90	- 0.10	...
STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE CO				
3 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2XZ 0131 225 2552				
Cash	279.50	294.30	+ 0.20	...
Equity	1146.40	1206.80	- 7.70	...
European	185.00	194.80	- 0.80	...
Far East	182.30	191.90	+ 2.00	...
Fixed Interest	430.20	453.20	- 5.00	...
Index Linked	224.70	236.60	- 1.60	...
International	675.30	710.90	+ 1.20	...
Managed	790.00	831.60	- 3.30	...
Nth American	174.20	183.40	- 3.00	...
Property	373.70	393.40	+ 0.20	...
Pensions				
Cash	441.20	464.50	+ 0.40	...
Equity	1711.80	1801.90	-13.60	...
European	225.30	237.20	- 0.30	...
Far East	148.20	156.10	- 2.00	...
Fixed Interest	613.30	645.60	- 6.50	...
Index Linked	314.40	331.00	- 2.10	...
International	973.70	1025.00	+ 0.20	...
Managed	1143.20	1203.40	- 5.70	...
Nth American	223.80	235.60	- 4.70	...
Property	518.40	545.70	- 0.80	...
Stock Exchange	258.50	272.20	- 1.10	...
SUN ALLIANCE				
St Mark's Court, Horsham, Sussex 01403 232323				
Managed Fund	753.70	793.40	- 2.40	...
Equity Fund	998.10	1050.70	- 4.00	...
Fixed Interest Fd	446.10	469.60	- 4.10	...
Index-Linked Fd	339.50	357.40	- 1.80	...
Property Fund	531.70	559.70	- 1.00	...
International Fd	743.50	782.70	- 1.90	...
N American Fd	310.90	327.30	- 4.20	...
Far East Fund	246.90	259.90	+ 4.20	...
Deposit Fund	311.70	328.20	+ 0.40	...
Intnl Bd 1	#101.80	...	- 0.60	...
Worldwide Bond	175.00	184.30	- 0.20	...
European	183.10	192.80	+ 0.50	...
Phoenix Assurance				
Wealth Assured	747.30	786.70	- 9.20	...
Ebor Phoenix Eq	508.60	548.60	- 5.70	...
Property Growth				
Property Fund 1	617.40	...	- 1.00	...
-do- Acc 1	573.80	...	- 1.00	...
Agricultural Fd 1	858.90	...	+ 0.90	...
-do- Acc 1	823.00	...	+ 0.80	...
Abbey Nat Fd 1	460.20	...	- 0.30	...
Abbey Nat Acc 1	484.60	...	- 0.30	...
Investment Fd 1	402.60	...	- 1.20	...
Investment (A) 1	385.80	...	- 1.20	...
Equity 1	1459.70	...	- 5.40	...
Equity Acc 1	1394.20	...	- 5.30	...
Money Fund 1	499.50	...	+ 0.60	...
-do- Acc 1	476.40	...	+ 0.60	...
Actuarial Fd 1	665.10	...	- 2.30	...
Gilt-Edged Fd 1	418.90	...	- 3.70	...
-do- Acc 1	418.90	...	- 3.70	...
Retire Annuity 1	1272.10	...	...	...
Immed Annuity 1	307.50	...	...	...
Bldg Soc Life 1	236.70	...	+ 0.30	...
SUN LIFE OF CANADA				
Basingview, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 2DZ Dealing: 01256 841414				
Growth Acc 1	1618.50	...	-10.10	...
Managed Acc 1	931.50	...	+ 6.40	...
Equity Account 1	1349.30	...	-17.40	...
Mngd Fund Acc	426.30	448.80	+ 3.00	...
Equity Fund Acc	586.40	617.30	+ 3.00	...
Prop Fund Acc	267.20	281.30	+ 0.30	...
Fixed Int Fd Acc	339.10	357.00	+ 1.00	...
Money Fund Acc	230.40	242.50	+ 0.20	...
Indx-Lnk Scs Ac	217.70	229.20	- 0.40	...
Pers Pens Acct 1	2089.10	...	-23.50	...
Pens Mngd Acct	971.10	1022.20	-11.50	...
Pens Guarantee	274.20	288.70	+ 0.50	...
Pens Equity	372.10	391.70	- 5.20	...
Pens Property	312.10	328.60	+ 0.50	...
Pens Fixed Int	319.00	335.80	- 0.20	...
Pens Intl	271.20	285.50	- 4.70	...
Pens Money	250.10	263.30	- 0.30	...
Pens Indx-Lnkd	208.80	219.80	- 1.40	...
SUN LIFE UNIT				
St James Barton, Bristol BS99 7SL 0117 9426911				
Managed Acc	988.40	1040.50	- 2.60	...
Property Acc	317.50	334.30	- 1.40	...
Equity Acc	1635.20	1721.30	- 6.10	...
Fixed Int Acc	438.90	462.00	- 4.50	...
Cash Acc	323.00	340.00	+ 0.20	...
Amer Equity Acc	457.50	481.60	- 4.90	...
Japan Acc	315.20	331.80	+ 2.10	...
Pacific Acc	387.70	408.20	+ 0.60	...
Far Eastern Acc	879.40	925.70	+ 1.10	...
International Acc	658.40	693.10	+ 4.70	...
Distribution Fund	288.40	303.60	+ 1.70	5.93
European	209.20	220.30	- 0.10	...
Deffrd Dist	184.30	194.00	...	...
TSB LIFE LTD				
Charlton Place, Andover, Hants SP10 1RE 01264 345678				
Managed Fund	314.90	331.50	- 0.50	...
Property Fund	233.50	245.90	+ 2.70	...
Fixed Interest Fd	243.50	256.40	- 2.90	...
Money Fund	209.00	220.10	+ 0.20	...
Equity Fund	409.70	431.30	+ 0.80	...
WINDSOR LIFE				
Windsor House, Telford, Shropshire 01952 292929				
Managed Bond	762.90	803.90	- 8.70	...
Money Fund	331.00	348.40	+ 0.10	...
Equity Fund	695.60	732.20	+ 2.40	...
Fixed Interest	306.40	322.50	- 0.80	...
Property Fund	346.10	364.30	+13.90	...
Gresham Framlington				
American & Genl	655.70	690.90	-19.10	...
Income	804.60	847.80	- 3.60	...
International Gth	678.50	715.00	- 1.50	...
Capital Fund	678.30	714.80	- 1.00	...
Recovery Fund	640.80	675.20	+ 7.80	...
Japan & General	277.10	292.00	+ 0.40	...
Formerly AEtna				
Life Funds				
Squirrel	18.82	19.81	+ 0.02	...
Bear	21.57	22.71	- 0.15	...
Owl	23.14	24.36	- 0.13	...
Bull	19.72	20.76	- 0.13	...
Stag	20.60	21.68	+ 0.27	...
Gilt Edged	20.28	21.35	- 0.04	...
Deposit	16.39	17.25	+ 0.01	...
Pensions				
Squirrel	25.94	27.30	+ 0.05	...
Bear	30.48	32.08	- 0.21	...
Owl	32.19	33.88	- 0.16	...
Bull	25.99	27.36	- 0.18	...
Stag	26.59	27.99	- 0.32	...
Gilt Edged	25.91	27.27	- 0.06	...
Deposit	21.50	22.63	+ 0.02	...
Pre 1982 Series				
3-Way Fund	643.09	...	- 4.33	...
1982 Series				
UK Equity	380.88	400.93	- 5.71	...
N Amer Equity	334.10	351.68	- 7.41	...
Far East Equity	385.85	406.16	- 1.98	...
Fixed	320.93	337.82	- 0.86	...
Cash Deposit	213.46	224.69	+ 0.15	...
Property	147.47	155.23	+ 0.37	...
Special Opp	387.65	408.05	- 4.91	...
Managed	339.36	357.12	- 2.41	...
Index-Linked Fd	200.70	211.26	- 0.86	...

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأمل

UNIT TRUSTS
THE BEST OF '95

Caroline Merrell
concludes her review of winners and losers



Supporters are looking for the next turn in the Taiwan market

US springs a surprise

The US stock market, boosted by a series of takeovers and mergers, and a seemingly insatiable appetite for technology stocks, proved to be the success story of the year.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average index has risen by more than 1,000 points over the last 12 months and has hit 50 successive record highs.

Ira Unschuld, Schroders' US portfolio manager, says: "A combination of low inflation, low interest rates and strong corporate profits helped the market." Shares in the technology sector proved to be the biggest winners, with Netscape's shares, for example, rocketing from $28 to $130 since flotation 18 months ago.

There are fears, however, that the hype surrounding technology shares has been overdone and a sharp re-rating downwards can be expected in the sector. On Monday this week Wall Street deals were delayed by an hour, and, when the market did open, concerns that the political impasse on the US budget could delay an expected cut in the Fed's interest rate caused the Dow to fall by 101.52 points, its seventh-largest one-day drop in points terms. On Tuesday the market began to rally on the back of a quarter-point Fed cut, to 5.5 per cent.

FAR EAST EXCLUDING JAPAN

The top-performing trusts were those invested in Hong Kong — rising by about 20 per cent last year. The market was helped by US interest rate cuts and by Chinese economic expansion. Other markets did less well. Taiwan suffered a 40 per cent fall, triggered by its conflict with China over the Formosa Straits. This week, however, Taiwan said it would give foreigners easier access to their capital invested in its stock market.

Malaysia and Thailand were drawn into the crises of confidence over emerging markets after Mexico's financial catastrophe, because both run large current account deficits. Malaysia and Thailand have stronger economic fundamentals than Mexico, but deficit concerns will cause short-term market blips.

EUROPE

Some of the more peripheral markets have provided the largest gains. French efforts to cut spending and ease the deficit, in part to satisy European monetary union requirements, triggered the recent strikes. This, coupled with increasing realisation that many of France's biggest businesses are inefficient, meant that unit trusts with large French holdings had a poor year. Mark Horn, director of European investment at Kleinwort Benson, says the relative weakness of sterling against the franc helped to stem losses. Sterling weakness was also a factor for trusts with high exposure to the German market, which rose 6 per cent. This return would be boosted by 16 per cent for UK investors because of the weakness of the pound against the mark. But not every sector did well in Germany. Mr Horn says: "Small companies had a dismal year, down 20 or 30 per cent." He believes next year may be more difficult, with unemployment increasing and an election looming in 1997.

BONDS AND FIXED FUNDS

Bond funds, which include the new generation of funds aimed at the corporate bond Pep market, had a good year. Paul Brain, head of European bonds at Guinness Flight, said: "The main story for the bond market has been the general slowdown in economic growth."

TRUST WATCH

EUROPE

RANK		CASH
1	Morgan Grenfell Europa	142.76
2	Morgan Grnfll Euro Gth	126.55
3	Old Mutual Swiss Equities	126.09
4	INVESCO European Sml Cos	123.21
5	Gartmore Euro Select Opps	123 02
114	Laurentian European	98.56
115	St James's Pl Greater Eur Pro	98.28
116	Mercury WT Euro Eqty Bear	97.74
117	Framlington Conti Smllr Cos	95.10
118	Old Mutual European	93.63

NORTH AMERICA

RANK		CASH
1	PM North American Growth	165.62
2	Friends Prov Am Small Cos	153.37
3	Hill Samuel US Smaller Cos	152.57
4	Beckman Bio-Tech	152.11
5	Lazard North Am Growth	150.71
122	Mercury WT US Curr Bear	95.50
123	Govett Dollar Bear	91.91
124	Mercury WT US Treasury Bear	84.80
125	Govett US Bear	76.27
126	Mercury WT US Equity Bear	75.60

GILT FIXED INTEREST

RANK		CASH
1	Beckman International	123.09
2	Thornton Dresd Euro Bond	116.37
3	Murray Global Bond	116.00
4	Marlborough Managed	115.99
5	Abtrust Global Bond	115.78
79	Utd Friendly Fixed Interest	104.37
80	Utd Friendly Indx Linked Gilt	103.26
81	Guin Flight Mgd Curr & Bd	103.26
82	Edinburgh Preferred High Inc	100.93
83	Sovereign Control Perfmnce	100.84

Top and bottom five trusts in sector shown. Value of £100 invested on offer-to-bid basis with net income reinvested.

—CAN—
SMALL
SAVERS
REALLY BUY
—INTO A—
BASKET
—OF—
SHARES
CHEAPLY?

Attempting to pick winners from the 3,500 shares quoted on the London Stock Exchange is a daunting prospect. What's more, buying a wide spread of shares for yourself would be prohibitively expensive.

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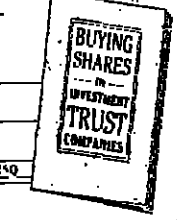

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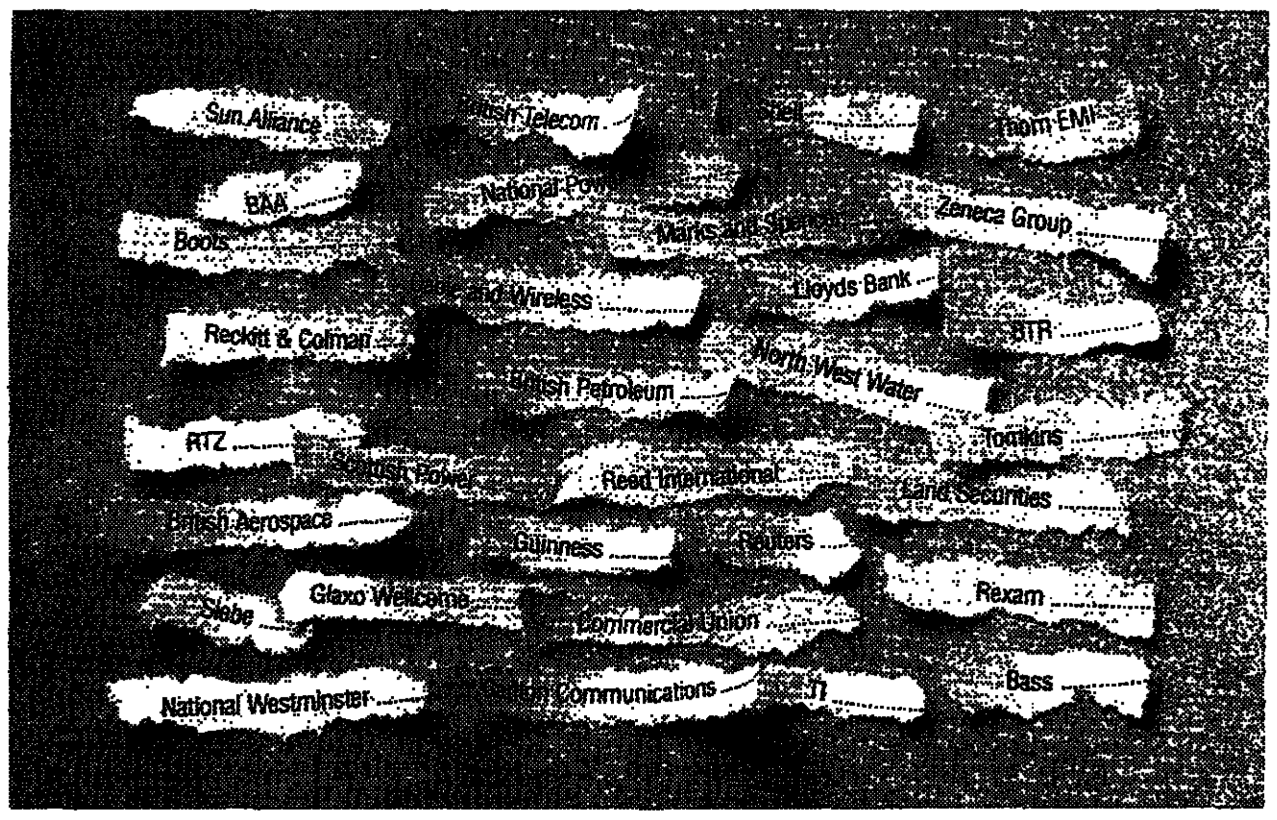

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Groland Amer	195.40	207.80†	- 2.20	0.50
Groland Equity	269.70	286.90	- 1.10	2.08
Groland Euro	242.20	256.30	+ 1.60	1.26
Groland Expt Bd	126.30	130.90	+ 0.00	0.81
Groland Gilt	76.64	79.01	- 0.86	5.10
Groland Japan	178.70	189.10†	+ 4.40	..

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
General Acc	614.30	653.80	- 3.20	2.63
General Inc	527.80	561.50	- 2.70	2.63
UK Growth Acc	414.00	440.50	- 3.10	2.86
UK Growth Inc	275.80	293.50	- 2.00	2.86
Higher Inc Acc	759.90	808.50	- 4.30	4.20
Higher Inc Inc	422.00	449.00	- 2.40	4.20
Gilts/Fxd Int Acc	205.30	217.80	- 1.70	5.51
Gilts/Fxd Int Inc	94.84	100.10	- 0.80	5.51
Nth American	330.50	351.70	- 2.80	...
Europe	319.70	340.20	+ 0.60	0.70
Brit Excell	82.83	88.12†	- 0.53	2.97
Brit Fxdints Acc	111.20	118.40	- 0.80	4.76
Brit Fxdints Inc	77.86	82.83	- 0.62	4.76
Global Opps	95.78	101.90†	+ 0.10	0.30
Balanced Acc	60.31	64.17	- 0.28	2.85
Balanced Inc	57.71	61.40	- 0.26	2.85
Japan Acc	47.88	50.94	+ 0.72	
Pac Basin Acc	385.70	410.40	+ 3.30	1.01

ABBEY UNIT TST MGRS
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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Gilts & Fixed Int	131.60	139.50†	- 1.30	7.17
High Inc Equity	173.70	185.80	- 1.00	4.24
Worldwide Bond	292.80	310.20†	- 0.10	4.51
American Growth	331.50	354.30	- 4.60	0.36
Asian Pacific	316.10	338.10	+ 1.60	..
Assets & Earnings	282.00	300.00†	- 4.80	2.89
Euro Capital Acc	158.70	169.70	- 1.70	0.61
Extra Inc	44.06	46.87	- 0.80	8.58
General	259.20	275.70	- 3.80	3.02
Global Opps	58.94	62.70	- 0.08	0.48
Japan	126.90	135.70	+ 3.00	..
Managed Inc	47.01	50.01	- 0.54	4.65
Masterfund	152.50	163.10	- 0.80	1.45
US Emerging Cos	172.10	183.10	- 5.30	...
Ethical	74.80	79.38	- 0.08	2.47
International	127.10	135.20	+ 0.20	0.60
Dividend & Growth	65.34	69.51	- 0.61	4.04
Global Gwth & Sec	70.83	75.67	+ 0.07	2.67

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Cazenove Portfolio	94.74	101.21	+ 0.46	2.54
American Portfolio	111.65	118.53†	- 0.73	0.94
European Portfolio	110.37	118.05	+ 1.49	0.50
High Income	52.24	52.38	- 0.48	8.00
Japanese Portfolio	70.27	74.72	+ 1.28	...
Pacific Portfolio	147.21	158.30†	+ 1.83	1.43
UK Inc & Growth	88.02	94.37	+ 0.99	3.03
Utility & Bond	57.58	58.23	+ 0.68	6.61

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0171 588 1815

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Inv Fund	711.18	721.82	- 8.60	4.48
Fxd Int Sec	157.85	158.49	+ 0.36	9.02

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Investment Inc	716.94	727.78	- 4.82	4.38
Investment Acc	£31.57	£32.05	-21.29	...
Fixed Int Inc	130.07	130.59	- 0.31	8.01
Fixed Int Acc	216.47	217.33	- 0.50	...

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Beckman Intl	93.02	98.10	- 0.68	3.03
Beck Bio-Tech	41.98	45.28†	+ 0.56	
Acorn Ethical Tst	167.77	178.17†	...	0.94
City Fin Assets	76.70	80.54	- 0.59	2.07
City Fin America	104.85	110.10	- 0.78	...
City Fin Intl	87.43	91.81	- 0.43	0.88
City Fin Japan	153.19	160.86†	- 0.16	.
Friars Hse Cap	287.88	311.95	+ 1.48	2.34
Friars Hse Inc	191.00	207.48†	- 0.86	4.35
Buckley Wold Gth	136.74	144.94	- 3.00	.
Fairmount Cap Gth	141.64	149.09†	- 1.78	..
Fairmount Intl	154.81	162.12†	- 1.19	
J Std Inc/Gth Inc	54.37	57.09†	- 1.34	2.50

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Emerging Markets	54.65	57.98	- 0.30	

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
American Gwth	74.23	78.97	- 1.16	.
Dragon Growth	69.76	73.54	+ 0.95	0.86
Equity High Inc	88.09	93.71†	+ 0.73	4.04
-do- Accum	123.13	130.99	+ 1.02	4.04
Extra Income Inc	28.84	28.27	- 0.24	7.21
Extra Income Acc	27.58	29.42	- 0.25	7.21
European Gwth	57.82	61.35	+ 0.45	1.10
Evergreen	28.98	30.99	- 0.18	...
General Equity	95.11	100.91	- 0.15	2.90
Japan Growth	52.98	56.36	+ 0.87	...
Pedigree Gwth	57.36	61.02	- 0.91	2.68

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
World Health	195.80	209.10	+ 7.80	..
Income	188.60	200.63	+ 1.38	3.04
UK Growth	74.18	78.91	+ 0.53	0.44
International	81.08	86.22	+ 0.18	0.07
Ecology	90.83	96.62	- 0.78	1.11
European	144.79	154.03	+ 1.37	
Far Eastern	311.20	331.00	+12.00	.

KLEINWORT BENSON UNIT TRUSTS
Dealers: 0171 956 7354

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Income Trusts				
Bond Income	100.40	103.80†	- 0.80	7.41
Gilt Yield	119.30	125.90†	- 1.10	6.75

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
UK Growth	412.22	438.53	- 8.17	2.64
-do- Accum	552.51	587.77	- 8.27	2.64

MW JOINT INVESTORS LTD
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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Fd #	1414.70	1435.70†	-17.80	3.00
Income #	1039.10	1055.40	- 8.80	4.00

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Maldon General	158.10	182.20	...	3.72

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Global Income	222.60	236.80†	+ 0.80	3.68
High Yield	144.90	154.10	- 0.60	5.88
-do- Accum	457.20	486.40	- 1.70	5.88
Smllr Cos Dtr	55.57	59.12†	+ 0.31	2.90
Capital Growth Trusts				
Amer Smllr Cos	128.20	136.40	+ 0.10	...
Asian Growth	329.00	350.00	+ 4.90	0.24
-do- Accum	386.60	411.30	+ 5.80	0.24
North American	97.85	104.10†	- 0.30	0.25
European Special	113.90	121.20	+ 1.10	0.10
European	163.70	174.10†	+ 0.30	0.47
-do- Accum	215.90	229.70†	+ 0.30	0.47
Global Eqty Inc	114.90	122.00	+ 0.30	2.11
Japan	430.80	458.30	+ 7.10	..

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST LTD
01244 680 066

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
M & S Inv Ptflo	168.30	177.20	+ 0.40	2.13
-do- Accum	195.90	206.20	+ 0.50	2.13
UK Sel Ptflo	145.60	153.30†	+ 0.60	2.49
-do- Accum	173.10	182.20†	+ 0.60	2.49

MARLBOROUGH FUND MGRS LTD
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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Managed Tst	74.37	79.12	- 0.06	3.59

MARTIN CURRIE UNIT TRUSTS LTD
0131 479 4846

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Intl Income	78.80	83.65†	+ 0.30	4.13

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
-do- Accum	142.10	148.78	- 0.30	6.42
FT-SE 100 Acc	62.06	65.92	- 0.04	2.51
FT-SE 100 Dist	61.00	63.94	- 0.04	2.51
Gilt & Fxd Int	56.40	58.89†	- 0.48	6.61
-do- Accum	172.00	179.00†	- 1.40	6.61
High Yield	229.30	240.10	- 0.30	5.88
-do- Accum	605.50	634.00	- 0.80	5.88
Income	305.00	318.40	+ 0.40	4.19
-do- Accum	685.90	718.20	+ 1.00	4.19
Money Market UT	49.46	49.46	+ 0.04	5.63
-do- Accum	80.29	80.29	+ 0.08	5.63
Monthly Income	90.02	94.25†	- 0.47	4.87
Midland Personal Pension Unit Trust				
British	119.20	126.80	- 0.80	1.55
European Growth	115.30	122.20	- 1.00	0.02
Gilt & Fixed	94.90	100.80	- 0.70	5.50
Income	93.52	99.49	+ 0.21	2.57

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BANKS

1995 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
2937½	2137½	ABN-AMRO	2921½	- 9½	4.4	10.8
654	413	Abbey Nat	632	+ 6	3.8	12.7
368	250	Allied Irish	347	+ 1	4.2	10.1
303	198	Aus New Z	302		5.3	
4425	2531¼	Bank America	4106¾	- 62½	...	
307½	191½	Bank Scotland	281	+ 3	2.7	12.4
812½	557½	Barclays	747	+ 7	3.8	10.2
488	288	Bk of Ireland	467½	+ 2½	3.6	9.4
525	418	Cater Allen	429	- 4	8.7	7.1
4718¾	2450	Citicorp	4368¾	- 81¼	..	
340½	216¾	Close Bros	319	...	3.4	14.1
£162¼	£129¾	Commerzbk	£151¾	+ 21¼	3.6	..
1375	993¾	Dai Ichi Kan Y	1275	- 3½	0.4	
3231¼	2775	Deutsche Bk	3078¾	- 12½	2.4	
881¼	568¾	Espirito Santo	600	+ 16½	5.9	8.0
1611	1138¾	Fuji Bank Y	1524¾	+ 12½	0.4	
490	395	Gerrard Nat	444	- 4	6.3	14.3
253	180	Hambros	197	+ 2	4.8	...
1019	588	HSBC	1000	+ 2½	3.5	13.0
994	578	HSBC HK	977	+ 3	3.6	12.7
403	228	Irish Perm	400	...	3.0	9.2
463	353	Joseph (L)	448		5.2	25.0
145	85	King Shaxson	141		8.2	10.6
895	530	Lloyds	842	+ 10	4.0	12.9
592	479	Nat Aust Bk	587	...	6.8	...
697	454	Nat West	656	+ 6	4.3	10.2
3000	2150	Ottoman Bank	2500		6.6	3.4
67	44	Rea Brothers	66	+ 4	1.9	26.4
630½	373½	Ryl Bk Scott	573	+ 5	3.5	13.0
1478	906¾	Schroders	1303	+ 3	1.4	18.6
1180	823¾	Schroders N/V	1098		1.6	15.6
111	81	Singer & Fried	109	..	4.2	11.3
625	246	Stand Chart	545	...	2.1	13.7
417	217	TSB	397	+ 4	3.6	13.8
121	70	Union	96	- 2	3.9	
£145¼	9043¾	Wells Fargo	£137¾	- 175	2.2	
270	211	Westpac	268¾		5.1	
295	200	Wintrust	275	.	5.4	15.5

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Nicholson has high hopes for Shankar

Richard Evans, racing journalist of the year, passes on some choice tips from the leading trainers

Although the form of Father Christmas is rock solid when it comes to giving presents, even he would be pushed to deliver racegoers with a winning tip during the festive season. However, the leading trainers have stepped into Santa's shoes and provided readers of *The Times* with their best selections this coming week.

DAVID NICHOLSON: The red-socked champion trainer emerged from his grotto at Jackdaws Castle and, without hesitation, offered a brace of Christmas crackers. Leading the way is **Shankar** (12.45 Kempton, Boxing Day). "He won at Newbury on very bad ground and was then second to Zephyrus, having made a mistake at the last."

Nicholson also pinpointed **Air Shot** (Warwick, Friday). "He was going very well at Chepstow last time and would just about have won when unseating his rider four out. He loves soft ground."

SIMON SHERWOOD: He hopes to maintain his outstanding 40 per cent strike rate, courtesy of a lightly-raced horse, **Lookout Mountain** (Newbury, Friday), who used to be with the Findon trainer, Josh Gifford. The Lambourn handler said: "He finished second at Folkestone the other day over an inadequate trip. That was his first run for two years, having finished fifth to Squire Silk on his only previous start. Josh always thought the world of him."

OLIVER SHERWOOD: Simon's elder brother is keen to win the Challow Hurdle on the same Newbury card for the third year running, and is content to rely on the progressive **Zephyrus**. Winner of both starts this term, "he wants soft ground and the step up in trip."

CHARLIE MANN: Enjoying his best year and is clearly hoping for a bumper festive season. The ex-Dermot Weld-trained **Kippanour** finished an excellent three-length third behind Our Kris at Cheltenham recently and is entered at both Kempton (12.40) and Chepstow (1.20) next Wednesday.

The Lambourn trainer has high hopes for another former Irish-trained horse, **Tale Of Endurance** (3.05 Newton Abbot, Boxing Day), who is expected to put two poor efforts behind him. "He was wrong twice when we ran him, but he's not bad."

Mann also selected **Bonjour**, who would have gone close but for falling at Huntingdon recently, and is entered at Plumpton (1.05) and Taunton (2.50) next Thursday.

KIM BAILEY: Relying on two of his best novice chasers to provide some seasonal success. **Feel The Power**, potentially the best, runs in the Feltham Novices' Chase (1.15 Kempton, Boxing Day), while different riding tactics should assist **Simple Arithmetic** (2.50) on the same card.

CHARLIE EGERTON: Cuts a dashing appearance in his quicker paces and he hopes **Hawker Hunter** will do likewise with blinkers applied for the first time at Leicester (2.55, Wednesday) or Taunton (2.50, Thursday).

MARK PITMAN: Assistant to Mrs P and something of a form guru, chose **Smith's Band** (1.10 Wincanton, Tuesday) with some confidence and also highlighted the chances of **Willsford** in the four-mile chase at Cheltenham on New Year's Day.

PAUL NICHOLLS: The in-form West Country trainer will probably send the impressive **See More Business** for the Challow Hurdle at Newbury on Friday, but also hopes **With Impunity** will oblige on the soft ground (2.30 Chepstow, Wednesday).

RON HODGES: A new gallop has seen his string in top form during the past month and he cannot speak too highly about his mud-loving **Line Of Conquest**, a half-brother to High Baron, who goes for the bumper (3.30 Chepstow, Wednesday). "We think he is a top-class horse in the making," the Charlton Adam trainer confided.

PETER EASTERBY: If the ground is good or faster at Wetherby on Tuesday, the Malton trainer will be looking to the progressive **Cumbrian Challenge** (2.50) to strike once again.

PETER BEAUMONT: On the same Wetherby card, this experienced trainer is bullish about the chances of **Jodami**, his former Cheltenham Gold Cup winner, in the Rowland Meyrick Handicap Chase (2.20). "He worked at Southwell after racing the other day and I was very pleased with him." Provided there is give in the ground, **Irish Gent** (1.40 Sedgefield, Tuesday) is also expected to win for the Beaumont team.

NICKY HENDERSON: "I've got to go for **Cheryl's Lad** in the Bonusprint Handicap Hurdle (1.45 Kempton, Tuesday). He's an improving horse. Mind you, he'll have to be — he has been raised 20lb for his two wins. He must have good ground and I'm hopeful he can defy the handicapper. He looks a better performer this season."

JOSH GIFFORD: "Do I have to? It's tough because so much depends on the ground. If pushed [he was], I'll have to nominate **Grooving**. We've chosen the Bonusprint Handicap Hurdle in preference to the Bonusfilm Handicap Hurdle over a longer trip (1.45 Kempton, Boxing Day) and he's sure to run a big race. He's been raised quite a bit for winning at Fontwell but Philip [Hide] says he should overcome that."

CATHY TWISTON-DAVIES: "Our head lad points us to **Grange Brake** in the Coral Welsh National (Chepstow, Wednesday). He's an enigmatic character, a bit like my husband [trainer Nigel] in that respect. He'll be out of the handicap but our young rider, David Walsh, will claim his 5lb allowance and we're hoping he'll surprise us, as he did when beating Master Oats and Bradbury Star last time."

Jodami carries a vote of confidence for the Rowland Meyrick Chase at Wetherby

Cheryl's Lad to stay ahead of handicapper

BOXING DAY PREVIEW

KEMPTON
CHANNEL 4

12.45: Is River North, a group one winner on the Flat, another Alderbrook? The reports from Lady Herries's yard suggest he is certainly above average, and the booking of Richard Dunwoody improves his prospects. However from a betting angle he must be worth opposing on his first attempt over hurdles.

But for a mistake at the last, Shankar could have beaten the well regarded Zephyrus at Cheltenham and is fancied by David Nicholson to go one better here. **Master Beveled** has excelled since being switched to hurdling and boasts decent form, every bit as good as his rivals. He appreciated soft ground on the Flat, and should be a value bet. 'Iggins and Desert Green are others to consider.

1.15: There is little between Hill Of Tullow and Major Summit, if a form line through Berude Not To is an accurate guide. Both are well regarded and likely to be vying for favouritism. However, **Feel The Power** has long been considered one of the most exciting horses in Kim Bailey's yard. He has reportedly schooled well, so may be worth risking on his fencing debut. Those looking for an each-way alternative should consider Mr Mulligan, who completed a treble when winning in a canter at Bangor last month.

So Far Bold gives added strength to François Doumen's raiding party, and has reportedly shown plenty of ability in France, winning a handicap at Auteuil on his latest start. He is difficult to weigh up, but his shrewd trainer always merits respect.

1.45: Two well handicapped horses stand out here. Grooving is unbeaten in three starts over hurdles and Josh Gifford's proven mudlark looks well treated here. However, **Cheryl's Lad** is improving at such a rate that he could easily defy top weight. He quickened off a fast pace in the style of a decent horse at Cheltenham 18 days ago and Nicky Henderson holds the five-year-old in high regard.

Kingsfold Pet should run a big race on favoured ground over his correct trip, while Fourth In Line, who is usually held up, made the running at Cheltenham last time and is likely to fare better if waiting tactics are re-employed.

2.20: I will preview the King George VI Tripleprint Chase on Boxing Day.

2.50: Simple Arithmetic was held up behind the leaders on his chasing debut at Sandown and despite running a decent race to finish third behind Certainly Strong and Captain Khedive, the tactics did not help his cause. More use is likely to be made of Kim Bailey's smart novice and he is fancied to open his account over fences.

Callisoe Bay and Falmouth Bay are far from certain to be suited by the going and Hebridean and Harwell Lad look bigger dangers. Hebridean would have won but for falling at the last at Bangor recently, and will go well if he brushes up his jumping. Harwell Lad has no such problems with his fencing, and deserves this step up in class.

Nemuro, a useful hurdler, made a winning debut over fences at Bangor, but would prefer a faster surface.

RICHARD EVANS

Dunwoody: top rides

BIG RACE LINE-UP

2.20 KING GEORGE VI TRIPLEPRINT CHASE

C4

(Grade I: £63,835: 3m) (11 runners)

401	U6-P030	ALGAN 23 (CD,S) (Marquesa de Moratalla) F Doumen (Fr) 7-11-10 (Red, light green cap)	P Chevalier	85
402	FU3F6-1	BARTON BANK 59 (CD,F,G,S) (Mrs J Mould) D Nicholson 9-11-10 (Emerald green, white stars, emerald green cap, white star)	A Maguire	98
403	P2300/1-	BOOK OF MUSIC 374 (G) (Mrs D Lousada) K Bailey 7-11-10 (Yellow, purple stripe, purple and yellow hooped sleeves and cap)	M A Fitzgerald	71
404	111-10F	COULTON 35 (F,G,S) (M St Quinton) O Sherwood 8-11-10 (Pink and yellow diamonds, yellow sleeves and cap)	J Osborne	88
405	11U21-1	DUBLIN FLYER 45 (C,D,G,S) (J Sumner) T Forster 9-11-10 (Green, yellow sleeves, white cap)	B Powell	91
406	00-3122	EGYPT MILL PRINCE 25 (BF,F,G,S) (S Webb) Mrs J Pitman 9-11-10 (White, red seams and sleeves)	W Marston	77
407	1241-21	MERRY GALE 31 (G,S) (H Stanley) J Dreaper (Ire) 7-11-10 (White, yellow diamonds, yellow sleeves, quartered cap)	G Bradley	90
408	4163-62	MONSIEUR LE CURE 17 (CD,G,S) (H Brown) J Edwards 9-11-10 (Orange, black and white hooped cap)	J F Titley	80
409	11UF-11	ONE MAN 17 (D,F,G,S) (J Hales) G Richards 7-11-10 (Yellow, red star, yellow sleeves, white armlets, yellow cap with red star)	R Dunwoody	[illegible]
410	35-23F3	VAL D'ALENE 23 (CD,G,S) (M de Montfort) F Doumen (Fr) 8-11-10 (Blue and yellow hoops, blue sleeves, black cap)	A Kondrat	95
411	5/23112-	BRIEF GALE 249 (C,G,S) (Mrs C Zetter-Wells) J Gifford 8-11-5 (Royal blue, large red spots, royal blue sleeves with red spots, red cap)	P Hide	94

BETTING: 2-1 One Man, 3-1 Barton Bank, 4-1 Merry Gale, 8-1 Dublin Flyer, 14-1 Algan, Val D'Alene, 16-1 Coulton, 20-1 others.

1994: ALGAN 6-11-10 P Chevalier (16-1) F Doumen (Fr) 9 ran

COMPREHENSIVE FORM GUIDE TO THE 11 CONTENDERS

ALGAN

Dec 3, Auteuil, very soft: see Val D'Alene.

Nov 11, Auteuil, very soft: (9-13) 6½l 3rd to Al Capone II (11-0) with Val D'Alene (10-12) a faller (3m 3f 110yd, ch, £71,856, 9 ran).

Mar 16, Cheltenham, soft: see Merry Gale.

Feb 25, Kempton, heavy: see Val D'Alene.

BARTON BANK

Oct 28, Wetherby, good to firm: (11-2) beat Young Hustler (11-10) 7l (3m 110yd, gd II ch, £20,581, 3 ran).

Apr 6, Aintree, good: see Merry Gale.

Mar 16, Cheltenham, soft: see Merry Gale.

BOOK OF MUSIC

Dec 17, 1994, Ascot, good: (11-3) beat Martin's Lamp (11-10) 20l (2m 3f 110yd, gd II nov ch, £9,465, 5 ran).

COULTON

Nov 21, Huntingdon, good: (11-10) close 3rd when last fence faller behind Travado (11-6) (2m 4f 110yd, gd II ch, £15,775, 7 ran).

Nov 11, Cheltenham, good: see Dublin Flyer.

Oct 22, Wincanton, firm: (11-10) beat Amtrak Express (10-9) 6l (2m 5f, gd II lim hcap ch, £17,151, 3 ran).

DUBLIN FLYER

Nov 11, Cheltenham, good: (11-8) beat Egypt Mill Prince (10-9) ½l with Coulton (12-0) 23½l 7th (2m 4f 110yd, gd III hcap ch, £38,502, 12 ran).

Apr 6, Aintree, good: (12-0) beat Toureen Prince (10-0) 9l (2m 6f, hcap ch, £24,955, 26 ran).

Mar 15, Cheltenham, soft: (11-3) 1l 2nd to Kadi (10-4) (2m 4f 110yd, hcap ch, £25,928, 12 ran).

EGYPT MILL PRINCE

Dec 1, Sandown, good: (10-11) 11l 2nd to Lonesome Glory (10-0) (2m 4f 110yd, hcap ch, £6,852, 4 ran).

Nov 11, Cheltenham, good: see Dublin Flyer.

Oct 28, Ascot, good to firm: (11-8) beat Big Matt (10-7) 1l (2m, hcap ch, £16,858, 8 ran).

MERRY GALE

Nov 25, Punchestown, yielding: (12-0) beat King Of The Gales (11-8) 10l (2m 4f, gd I ch, £22,750, 7 ran).

Nov 16, Tipperary, good: (12-0) 6l 2nd to Kiaron Davis (12-0) (2m, gd III ch, £6,850, 4 ran).

Apr 6, Aintree, good: (11-9) beat Martomick (11-0) 15l with Monsieur Le Cure (11-9) 2½l 3rd and Barton Bank (11-5) tailed off 6th (3m 1f, gd II ch, £31,558, 6 ran)

Mar 16, Cheltenham, soft: (12-0) 34l 4th to Master Oats (12-0) with Monsieur Le Cure (12-0) 13l 6th, Barton Bank (12-0) disputing 2nd when fell 15th, Algan (12-0) ridden when unseated rider 13th and Val D'Alene (12-0) unseated rider 6th (3m 2f 110yd, gd I ch, £122,540, 15 ran).

MONSIEUR LE CURE

Dec 9, Haydock, good: see One Man.

Nov 25, Newbury, soft: (11-9) 50l 6th to Couldnt Be Better (10-8) (3m 2f 110yd, gd III hcap ch, £48,989, 11 ran).

Apr 6, Aintree, good: see Merry Gale.

Mar 16, Cheltenham, soft: see Merry Gale.

ONE MAN

Dec 9, Haydock, good: (11-2) beat Monsieur Le Cure (11-8) 11l (3m, Ch, £10,114, 5 ran).

Nov 11, Ayr, good: (10-12) beat Jodami (12-0) 7l (3m 1f, lim hcap ch, £10,309, 7 ran)

Feb 25, Kempton, heavy: see Val D'Alene.

VAL D'ALENE

Dec 3, Auteuil, very soft: (10-12) 7½l 3rd to As Des Carres (10-0) with Algan (10-0) 3½l 7th (2m 6f, Ch, £59,880, 12 ran)

Nov 11, Auteuil, very soft: see Algan.

Mar 16, Cheltenham, soft: see Merry Gale.

Feb 25, Kempton, heavy: (11-2) beat Southolt (10-2) 20l with Algan (11-10) tailed off when unseated rider last, remounted to finish 5th, and One Man (10-12) prominent when fell 12th (3m, gd III hcap ch, £29,700, 9 ran)

BRIEF GALE

Apr 21, Aintree, good: (11-9) 11l 2nd to Unguided Missile (12-0) (3m 1f, Nov ch, £6,758, 6 ran).

Mar 15, Cheltenham, soft: (10-13) beat Harcon (11-4) 9l (3m 1f, gd I nov ch, £49,163, 13 ran).

Feb 25, Kempton, heavy: (10-12) beat Kadi (11-3) ¾l (2m 4f 110yd, gd II nov ch, £11,129, 7 ran).

Selection: VAL D'ALENE

REST OF KEMPTON'S BOXING DAY CARD

THUNDERER

12.45 River North
1.15 Hill Of Tullow
1.45 Fourth In Line
2.20 Val D'Alene
2.50 Harwell Lad
3.20 **SESAME SEED** (nap)

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 2.20 **ONE MAN**.

GOING: SOFT — SIS

12.45 BONUSPOST NOVICES HURDLE

C4

(£7,003: 2m) (8 runners)

101	F422-12	SHANKAR 18 (D,BF,S) (International Plywood Plc) D Nicholson 4-11-10	A Maguire	[illegible]
102	40-	BRAZIL OR BUST 311 (Mrs C Waters) P Webber 4-11-5	B Powell	—
103		DESERT GREEN 24F (Mrs P Jubert) R Hannon 6-11-5	R Hughes	—
104	R-5P	DONTFORGET INSIGHT 21 (T Neill) C Brooks 4-11-5	G Bradley	57
105	00-1	'IGGINS 21 (D,S) (Pell-mell Partners) J Gifford 5-11-5	P Hide	83
106	3	INDEFENCE 17 (Indef Ltd) Mrs J Pitman 4-11-5	W Marston	75
107	5/112	MASTER BEVELED 17 (D,G,S) (Mrs E Williams) P Evans 5-11-5	J Osborne	85
108		RIVER NORTH 248F (P Savill) Lady Herries 5-11-5	R Dunwoody	—

BETTING: 2-1 River North, 3-1 Shankar, 5-1 'Iggins, Master Beveled, 8-1 Indefence, Desert Green, 33-1 others.

1994: WHO IS EQUINAME 4-11-0 M A Fitzgerald (20-1) N Henderson 11 ran

FORM FOCUS

SHANKAR 2l 2nd of 13 to Zephyrus in novice hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 1f, good). DESERT GREEN ½l 2nd of 6 to Star Of Zilzal in conditions race at Bath (1m, good to firm). 'IGGINS beat Welsh Mill ¾l in 19-runner novice hurdle at Huntingdon (2m 110yd, good to soft) with DONTFORGET INSIGHT pulled up 2 out. INDEFENCE 7½l 3rd of 14 to Crown Equerry in novice hurdle at Haydock (2m, good). MASTER BEVELED 5l 2nd of 13 to Mack The Knife in novice hurdle at Haydock (2m, good). RIVER NORTH best effort beat Monsun 2½l in group I Aral Pokal at Gelsenkirchen-Horst (1m 4f, good) August 1994.
Selection: SHANKAR

1.15 TRIPLEPRINT FELTHAM NOVICES CHASE

C4

(Grade I: £22,950: 3m) (9 runners)

201	21-3F2	EXECUTIVE OPTIONS 10 (F) (J McCaghy) J Queally (Ire) 6-11-7	—	83
202	26/1-	FEEL THE POWER 396 (S) (M Booth) K Bailey 7-11-7	J Osborne	—
203	1F11-11	HILL OF TULLOW 24 (D,F,G,S) (Lady Harris) D Nicholson 6-11-7	A Maguire	[illegible]
204	640-132	LE MEILLE 18 (F) (N Mitchell) A Jarvis 6-11-7	W Marston	85
205	1334-11	MAJOR SUMMIT 12 (G,S) (A Weller) J Gifford 6-11-7	P Hide	96
206	PP-2F1	MASTER ORCHESTRA 21 (D,S) (Hatchet Pinns) Miss H Knight 6-11-7	J F Titley	68
207	F-111	MR MULLIGAN 32 (D,F,G) (M Worcester) N Chance 7-11-7	M A Fitzgerald	82
208	2-00051	SO FAR BOLD 66 (B,D,S) (J Poynton) F Doumen (Fr) 5-11-7	P Chevalier	—
209	436-621	SOLO GENT 35 (F,G) (A King) A Jones 6-11-7	B Powell	67

BETTING: 7-4 Hill Of Tullow, 11-4 So Far Bold, 9-2 Major Summit, 6-1 Executive Options, Mr Mulligan, 10-1 Feel The Power, 14-1 Master Orchestra, 33-1 others.

1994: BROWNHALL 6-11-7 A Maguire (5-1) D Nicholson 6 ran

FORM FOCUS

EXECUTIVE OPTIONS 15l 2nd of 12 to Ventana Canyon in novice chase at Navan (2m 4f, good). FEEL THE POWER beat Prime Of Life 3½l in 14-runner novice hurdle at Newbury (2m 5f, good to soft) last season. HILL OF TULLOW beat Camitrov 2½l in chase at Sandown (3m 110yd, good). LE MEILLE 2½l 2nd of 4 to Celtic Town in novice chase at Doncaster (3m, good to firm). MAJOR SUMMIT beat Call It A Day 3l in novice chase at Towcester (2m 6f, soft). MASTER ORCHESTRA beat Sedge Warbler 3½l in maiden chase at Huntingdon (3m, good to soft). MR MULLIGAN beat Arctic Red distance in novice chase at Bangor (3m 110yd, good). SO FAR BOLD beat Blanville 2l in handicap chase at Auteuil (2m 7f 110yd, soft).
Selection: MAJOR SUMMIT

1.45 BONUSPRINT HANDICAP HURDLE

C4

(£7,133: 2m) (16 runners)

301	31-2130	NON VINTAGE 10 (D,G,S) (A Mann) M Chapman 4-11-10	B Powell	[illegible]
302	31FP-11	CHERYL'S LAD 18 (D,F,G,S) (Mrs E Bates) N Henderson 5-11-10	M A Fitzgerald	92
303	2/530-1	SOHRAB 15 (D,S) (Mrs J Richards) M Pipe 7-11-9	J Osborne	89
304	10-350F	SHOOFK 10 (S) (S Devine) S Dow 4-11-8	R Dunwoody	83
305	1121-40	FOURTH IN LINE 18 (D,G,S) (Mrs G Jenkinson) J Edwards 7-11-6	J F Titley	85
306	1473-06	KINGSFOLD PET 24 (D,G,S) (G Nye) M Haynes 6-11-5	D Skyrme	88
307	6-23431	BOOKCASE 13 (D,F,G) (Adapt Ltd) D Elsworth 8-11-4	A Procter (3)	90
308	P-22232	TEEN JAY 41 (D,F,G,S) (Gemini Associates) R Stronge 5-11-4	R Stronge	83
309	6120-50	AMANCIO 39 (D,S) (P Locke) G Harwood 4-11-4	M Perrett	87
310	25/0-305	ALBEMINE 10 (D,BF,F) (G Ward) Mrs J Cecil 6-11-0	T Kent	92
311	216-P4	DINO MALTA 16 (D,S) (Lady Harris) D Nicholson 4-11-0	A Maguire	83
312	11-1	GROOVING 28 (D,G,S) (Mrs T Brown) J Gifford 6-11-0	P Hide	90
313	10-3502	KEEP ME IN MIND 13 (D,F,S) (P Tory) N Mitchell 6-10-10	R Hughes	90
314	121U2-3	NAMASTE 28 (D,G,S) (J Gelvanoni) R Hoad 7-10-5	G Bradley	89
315	02/31-00	SECRETARY OF STATE 13 (D,G) (W Ponsonby) D Arbuthnot 9-10-0	—	74
316	3300-02	PYRAMIS PRINCE 19 (D,S) (J Whyte) J Whyte 5-10-0	D Finnegan (7)	86

Long handicap: Secretary Of State 9-8, Pyramis Prince 9-7.

BETTING: 7-2 Cheryl's Lad, 4-1 Grooving, 6-1 Bookcase, Sohrab, 10-1 Keep Me In Mind, Non Vintage, 12-1 Shoofk, Fourth In Line, 14-1 Teen Jay, 16-1 others.

1994: TRYING AGAIN 6-10-0 J Osborne (10-1) D Gandolfo 8 ran

FORM FOCUS

NON VINTAGE 1l 3rd of 7 to Padre Mio in grade II Bellway Homes Fighting Fifth Hurdle at Newcastle (2m, good) penultimate start. CHERYL'S LAD beat Morstock 8l in 10-runner handicap hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 1f, good) with DINO MALTA (11lb better off) 17l 4th and FOURTH IN LINE (9lb better off) 30l 8th. BOOKCASE beat KEEP ME IN MIND (1lb better off) head in 10-runner handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 2f, good) with SECRETARY OF STATE (3lb worse off) 40l 7th. Previously short-head and 3½l 3rd of 22 to Chief's Song in handicap hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good) with ALBEMINE (4lb better off) 11½l 7th and KEEP ME IN MIND (8lb better off) 11l 13th. TEEN JAY best recent effort neck 2nd of 9 to Stoney Valley in handicap hurdle at Stratford (2m 110yd, good). ALBEMINE 5½l 5th of 17 to Caltoate in handicap hurdle at Haydock (2m, good). GROOVING beat Pamplilo 8l in 8-runner handicap hurdle at Fontwell (2m 2f, soft) with NAMASTE (11lb better off) 3½l 3rd. PYRAMIS PRINCE 7l 2nd of 8 to Viceroy Ruler in handicap hurdle at Fakenham (2m 4f, good).
Selection: CHERYL'S LAD (nap)

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101	113143	GOOD TIMES 13 (BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Robinson) B Hall 12-0	B West (7)	88

Racecard number. Six-figure form (F — fell. P — pulled up. U — unseated rider. B — brought down. S — slipped up. R — refused. D — disqualified). Horse's name. Days since last outing: F if flat. (B — blinkers. V — visor. H — hood. E — Eyeshield. C — course winner. D — distance winner. CD — course and distance winner. BF — beaten favourite in latest race). Going on which horse has won (F — firm, good to firm, hard. G — good. S — soft, good to soft, heavy). Owner in brackets. Trainer. Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. The Times Private Handicapper's rating.

2.20 KING GEORGE VI TRIPLEPRINT CHASE

C4

(Grade I: £63,835: 3m) (11 runners)

RUNNERS AND RIDERS — SEE ABOVE

2.50 BONUSPHOTO WAYWARD LAD NOVICES CHASE

C4

(£14,135: 2m 4f 110yd) (9 runners)

501	250-F13	CALLISOE BAY 19 (BF,G,S) (R Waters) O Sherwood 6-11-7	J Osborne	96
502	5/410P-1	FALMOUTH BAY 33 (G,S) (J Morton) S Sherwood 6-11-7	G Bradley	76
503	1111	HARWELL LAD 25 (F,G,S) (H Wellstead) R Alner 6-11-7	Mr R Nuttall	84
504	64P-01F	HEBRIDEAN 13 (D,BF,G,S) (P Deal) D Nicholson 8-11-7	A Maguire	[illegible]
505	14-2601	NEMURO 13 (F,G) (Turf City Racing) D Elsworth 7-11-7	P Holley	88
506	F44/P-1U	TOTHEWOODS 34 (G,S) (Mrs M Scott) N Twiston-Davies 7-11-7	M A Fitzgerald	75
507	0633-2R	MR PICKPOCKET 13 (S) (R Sayer) Miss H Knight 7-11-3	J F Titley	79
508	4/0/25-4	POORS WOOD 41 (G,S) (A Weller) J Gifford 8-11-3	P Hide	53
509	14302-3	SIMPLE ARITHMETIC 24 (S) (Mrs M Motley) K Bailey 7-11-3	R Dunwoody	87

BETTING: 9-4 Callisoe Bay, 4-1 Hebridean, 5-1 Simple Arithmetic, 6-1 Harwell Lad, 8-1 Falmouth Bay, 10-1 Mr Pickpocket, Nemuro, 12-1 others.

1994: HIGH BARON 7-11-4 R Dunwoody (10-11 fav) R Alner 6 ran

FORM FOCUS

CALLISOE BAY beat Hawkfield 9l in 4-runner novice chase at Uttoxeter (2m, good) penultimate start. FALMOUTH BAY beat MR PICKPOCKET ¾l in 13-runner novice chase at Taunton (2m 3f, good). HARWELL LAD beat Silverino 4l in 15-runner handicap chase at Exeter (3m 7f 110yd, good to soft). HERBRIDEAN beat King Lucifer 3½l in 8-runner novice chase at Worcester (2m 4f 110yd, soft) penultimate start. NEMURO beat Trying Again 5l in novice chase at Exeter (2m 2f, good) with MR PICKPOCKET clear when carried out 4 out. TOTHEWOODS beat Persian Tactics 10l in novice chase at Haydock (2m, good) penultimate start. POORS WOOD 41l 4th to Inchcailloch in novice chase here (2m, good). SIMPLE ARITHMETIC 12l 3rd of 6 to Certainly Strong in grade II Westminster Taxi Insurance Henry VIII Novices' Chase at Sandown (2m, good) with TOTHEWOODS 3rd and beaten when unseated rider 2 out.
Selection: NEMURO

3.20 BONUSFILM HANDICAP HURDLE

(£7,328: 2m 5f) (13 runners)

601	2-13134	STRAWBERRY ANGEL 10 (F,S) (Mrs W Jeffords) C Brooks 4-12-0	Blythe Miller	87
602	303-F10	BELL STAFFBOY 18 (F,G) (K Bell & Son Ltd) C Broad 6-11-10	W Marston	97
603	P0/0012-	PRAGADA 287 (B,D,G,S) (Mrs M McGloal) R Rowe 12-11-7	D O'Sullivan	92
604	02-1112	FATHER SKY 25 (D,F) (K Komfeld) O Sherwood 4-11-6	J Osborne	[illegible]
605	4/5/61-0	SABAKI RIVER 18 (F,G,S) (Mrs B Taylor) Mrs J Retter 11-11-2	R Dunwoody	93
606	310/21	SESAME SEED 17 (G,S) (R Tooth) Mrs J Cecil 7-10-13	T Kent	94
607	4134-43	LUCKY BLUE 13 (G,S) (F Newman) N Thomson 8-10-9	J F Titley	97
608	P614-64	JEASSU 10 (CD,F,G,S) (Up and Running Ptnrs) A J Wilson 12-10-8	G Bradley	98
609	372-P51	PLUNDER BAY 20 (S) (E & W Robins) N Henderson 4-10-5	M A Fitzgerald	95
610	1144-50	MUNTAFI 10 (S) (The One Over Eight Partnership) G Harwood 4-10-5	M Perrett	94
611	00/511-F	DESMOND GOLD 29 (G,S) (J Scanlon & J Toner) Mrs D Haine 7-10-1	A Maguire	90
612	23/P10-	ANGELO'S DOUBLE 271 (S) (J Henwood) R Buckler 7-10-0	B Powell	93
613	P24-118	GINGER JIM 28 (D,F) (Mrs G Webster) P Hedger 4-10-0	M Clinton (7)	85

Long handicap: Ginger Jim 9-13.

BETTING: 9-4 Father Sky, 4-1 Sesame Seed, 6-1 Bell Staffboy, Plunder Bay, 10-1 Pragada, 12-1 Strawberry Angel, 14-1 others.

1994: NICK THE BEAK 5-10-5 J Osborne (3-1) J Upson 8 ran

FORM FOCUS

STRAWBERRY ANGEL 17½l 4th of 8 to Pridwell in hurdle at Ascot (2m 110yd, good). BELL STAFFBOY beat Celibate 1l in 5-runner handicap hurdle at Warwick (2m 4f 110yd, good) penultimate start. FATHER SKY 15l 2nd of 5 to See More Business in grade II Crowngap Winter Novices' Hurdle at Sandown (2m 6f, good). SESAME SEED beat Top Cees 4l in handicap hurdle at Doncaster (2m 4f, good). LUCKY BLUE head and 11l 3rd of 10 to Bookcase in handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 2f, good). PLUNDER BAY beat Twice A Night head in handicap hurdle at Leicester (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft). GINGER JIM beat Hurricane Blake 2½l in 6-runner conditional jockeys handicap hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 5f, good to firm) penultimate start.
Selection: SESAME SEED

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rns	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
Lady Herries	4	8	50.0	W Marston	5	14	35.7
F Doumen	4	12	33.3	P Hide	7	32	21.9
J Edwards	4	14	28.6	R Dunwoody	22	104	21.2
T Forster	4	14	28.6	M A Fitzgerald	13	62	21.0
R Alner	5	18	27.8	J Osborne	25	126	19.8
N Henderson	17	65	26.2	A Maguire	12	82	14.6

Blinkered first time

HEREFORD: 1.35 Flying Imp, 3.05 Ballydougan. MARKET RASEN: 12.25 Salutation, 2.00 Hillwalk, 3.35 Scottish Wedding. NEWTON ABBOT: 12.50 Tragic Hero, 1.50 Damas, 2.30 Bramblehill Buck, Hillwalk. SEDGEFIELD: 3.10 Fly To The End. WETHERBY: 3.20 Valley Garden. WINCANTON: 3.15 Carnival Kid.

Doumen has faith in his raiders

BY OUR RACING STAFF

FRANÇOIS DOUMEN considers the bookmakers have again underestimated the French challenge for the King George VI Tripleprint Chase at Kempton.

"If they were trained in England my horses would be half those odds," claims the trainer, referring to some of the more extragavant prices quoted about Algan and Val D'Alene for the Kempton showpiece.

Doumen, who says he has not the slightest interest in betting on French racing, has landed some notable gambling coups in the King George since he brought the unconsidered outsider Nupsala to Kempton in 1987.

"I backed him at 50-1 before that race, and he won it by 15 lengths," he said. "And I could not believe that I was able to get 16-1 about The Fellow when he won it first time." And Algan last year? "Yes, of course. I was on at 25-1, or was it only 20-1?"

Needless to say he has backed both his pair at healthy prices for the 1995 King George. Although admitting that the race looks especially strong, Doumen feels remote enough in his Lamorlaye yard not to be harried by the big Anglo-Irish reputations lined up against Algan and Val D'Alene.

"I am sitting here in France, and I read in my English racing papers good news about one rival, and bad news about another. I don't worry too much either way."

And Doumen has little to worry about, his string having accrued well over £1.5 million in prize-money in 1995, including a blitz of Flat and jumping winners just before the Parisian racing season closed down two weeks ago.

All this despite the deaths of his stable stars, Ucello and Ubu III, and the retirement of dual King George winner The Fellow to the Marquesa de Moratalla's stud near St Albans.

As for Algan and Val D'Alene, the trainer says: "They have been running in the top French jumping races this season. At home I have just been keeping them warmed up. They are both very fit."

Doumen is not prepared to split the two, but Ian Williams, his assistant, does confess to a slight preference. "Last year, I told Lord Oaksey I preferred The Fellow to the inexperienced Algan. That opinion was then broadcast on television before the race, so I felt a bit embarrassed.

"This time, I do think Algan may be the one, he really is spot on. We just keep hoping for some more rain," said Williams, an integral cog in the Doumen team since he left Jenny Pitman's yard four years ago.

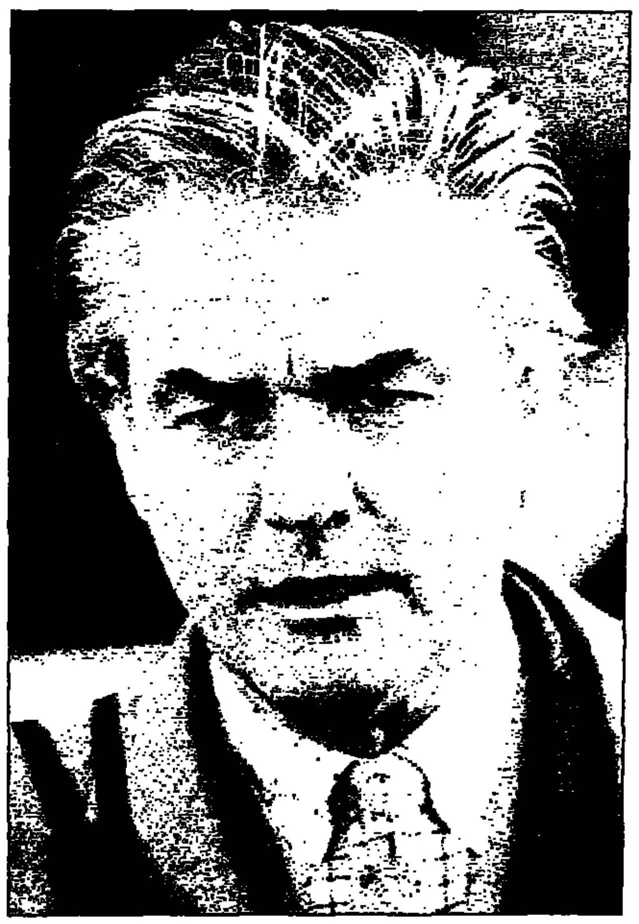
Doumen has also targetted So Far Bold at Kempton's Feltham Novices' Chase and the trainer is not shy about advancing the horse's claims.

"He is a quality horse, who recently won the same good race at Auteuil that Val D'Alene had won en route to his success in the Racing Post Chase," he said.

"We had an expensive time bringing him over for the abandoned Lingfield meeting recently but Josh Gifford helped tremendously by letting us school him over English fences at Findon."

The role of the Sunbury racecourse in the Doumen success story can be gauged from the fact that the family Jack Russell is called Kempton. And even Kempton, the dog, seems lucky for Doumen. A year ago, the trainer and his wife, Elizabeth, mislaid Kempton 50 miles from the stable only to recover the dog.

The Lamorlaye team will be hoping that their luck holds good again as Doumen attempts to plunder a fifth King George VI Chase.



Doumen: has found Kempton a happy hunting ground

River North primed for hurdling debut

CHAMPION Hurdle hope River North was yesterday reported in excellent heart after schooling in preparation for his long-awaited hurdling debut at Kempton on Boxing Day.

"Richard Dunwoody came down to ride him and I think he was pleased with him," said a spokeswoman for his trainer, Lady Herries. "He just popped over some small hurdles as it was too wet to go over the big ones.

"He's in great form, although he hasn't been out for some time. He was going to run in Italy at the end of the Flat season until the ground went against him.

"We'll know more about him after he's run at Kempton because, although he has schooled well, you can never tell how they will do until they've run. However, the ground should be perfect for him."

River North, a son of Lomond, landed a group one event in Germany on the Flat last year, and is quoted as short as 14-1 for the Champion Hurdle by William Hill. Alderbrook, another well-known Flat performer, heads the market at 11-4.

River North will be ridden by Dunwoody in the Bonuspost Novices' Hurdle, in which Richard Hughes, better known as a Flat jockey, will be on the Richard Hannon-trained Desert Green.

River North will be up against some useful opposition on his debut, as Master Beveled, a useful handicapper on the Flat, has already made his mark over timber, winning twice before chasing home another smart recruit from the Flat, Mack The Knife, at Haydock.

The David Nicholson-trained Shankar also has good hurdling form and will be a formidable rival for River North if he can reproduce his effort when narrowly beaten by Sweet Mignonette at Aintree in April.

The Josh Gifford-trained 'Higgins opened his aacount in fine style at Huntingdon recently but, in the opening event of the big Kempton programme, all eyes will be on River North, carrying the familiar Celtic Swing colours of Peter Savill.

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Nicholls has sights set on valuable targets

Nicholls: best season

PAUL NICHOLLS, the West Country trainer, reached a notable milestone when Coolree landed the Trafalgar Novices Handicap Chase at Southwell on Tuesday. The success was his thirtieth of the season, beating his previous best score established two seasons ago.

After a dip in his fortunes last term when his yard in Ditcheat, near Shepton Mallett, was afflicted by virus, Nicholls is on the rise again. As a jockey Nicholls experienced big-race triumphs in the *Hennessy Gold Cups* both at Newbury and *Leopardstown*.

And since graduating to the training ranks he has produced ample evidence that he can eventually match those feats in his new profession. A crop of talented novices, led by the unbeaten See More Business, have provided the highlights of the early campaign and they will carry stable hopes into the new year, preferably all the way to Cheltenham.

"It's nice to be doing so well at this stage of the season," he says. "This time four years ago I'd not had a winner but all the time I've been working on attracting new owners, a better class of horse and establishing a good team around me.

"We put a new gallop in this summer as well but there's not just been one thing that has made the difference. The horses are fit and healthy and that can help even in the moderate horses.

"Of course there is Tony McCoy as well. I used Graham Bradley two years ago and Richard Dunwoody last year but they had other commitments and this arrangement has worked very well. Tony has been able to ride the majority of the horses. He's very talented, not just at riding but schooling as well."

The association, which has helped propel McCoy towards a first jockeys' title, has already unearthed a number of Cheltenham Festival contenders. See More Business, whose name conjures memories of Nicholls's previous top novice chaser — the ill-fated See More Indians — is living up to his predecessor with three impressive wins over hurdles this season.

Call Equiname, winner of three of his five starts, most recently at Ascot, and Captain Khedive, another three-time winner, have shone too while his smart staying chaser, Deep Bramble, is poised to return in February.

"See More Business is the best horse I've had to date. It's almost poetic justice to have another good horse like him after losing See More Indians," Nicholls adds.

"People keep telling me to enter him in the Champion Hurdle but he won't be and neither will Call Equiname, who Tony McCoy believes would have beaten Pridwell at Ascot last Saturday.

"The problem with Call Equiname is that he suffers from sore shins, that's what is stopping him from being very good. He could hardly walk in his box on Saturday night but is fine now. It's a sign of immaturity which he will get over.

"Deep Bramble has had a break for the first time in two to three years. He was very lame after he was pulled up in the Gold Cup and I still don't know why. He helped make up for a disappointing season last term and on the two occasions he was right he won. He's been doing some very good work since he came back into training.

"*His owners may want me* to enter him in the Gold Cup but the Grand National is his target and the plan is to give him two runs in the Agfa Diamond Chase at Sandown and Greenalls at Haydock."

Captain Khedive is strongly fancied in the valuable Harry Brown Memorial Challenge Cup at Wolverhampton on Boxing Day. Other Nicholls runners with live chances are Vicompt De Valmont, who runs in Wednesday's Coral Welsh National at Chepstow, and Court Melody, who contests the Ladbroke Gold Cup at Newbury next Saturday.

In the new year Nicholls hopes Bond Jnr and ex-Martin Pipe-trained Punters Overhead might show novice chase form good enough to be considered for Cheltenham, while Nicholls is looking forward to the jumps debut of Lake Kariba, formerly with Charles O'Brien.

Johnson declares Morceli twice

MORCELI has been declared for two races at Wetherby by his trainer, Howard Johnson. Johnson was unable to contact the gelding's owner, Catherine Corbett, by the final declaration stage and was left in the dark as to whether she wished to run the grey in the Supermaster or Rowland Meyrick Handicap Chase. The action risks a fine, but Johnson hopes the local stewards will understand his position.

Johnson's wife, Sue, said: "Mrs Corbett was on holiday in Spain and not due back until it was too late. We left messages, but noboby realised that Boxing Day declarations had to be made early and we did not know what else to do.

"Mrs Corbett is an owner who very much likes to be involved in the decisions about her horses. We respect what she says and did not want to disappoint her by choosing the *wrong race.*"

Morceli, returning to fences after falling at Ascot and disappointing in the Fighting Fifth Hurdle at Newcastle, will face Jodami if he contests the Rowland Meyrick, in which he would be ridden by Paul Carberry. If he runs in the Supermaster he would be ridden by Lorcan Wyer.

Morceli's defection from the Rowland Meyrick, run over an extended three miles, would make him the third of the declarations likely to miss the race. One Man, trained by Gordon Richards, and Monsieur Le Cure, trained by John Edwards, have the King George VI Tripleprint Chase at Kempton Park as their first preference.

Meanwhile, Wolverhampton racecourse is set to broaden its appeal by hosting point-to-point racing.

Ashley Bealby, the clerk of the course, said: "We are having a schooling day on Saturday, January 6, when we will be using portable point-to-point fences and brush hurdles which are the same as French-style hurdles."

Bealby announced that the course will be playing host to the North Western Area point-to-point on Sunday, February 4, and the Wheatland Hunt on Sunday, May 19.

"This should be an ideal opportunity to introduce people to the track and we are expecting to have around 30 participants," Bealby continued.

Wolverhampton will now be the venue for all-weather flat racing, turf jumping, floodlit racing and point-to-points.

RACING NEXT WEEK

TUESDAY: Ayr (first race, 12.25), Hereford (12.35), Huntingdon (12.30), Kempton Park (C4, 12.45), Market Rasen (12.25), Newton Abbot (12.50), Sedgefield (12.40), Wetherby (12.50), Wincanton (12.40), Wolverhampton (1.00).

WEDNESDAY: Chepstow (BBC, 12.20), Edinburgh (12.35), Kempton Park (C4, 12.40), Leicester (12.55), Wetherby (1.00).

THURSDAY: Carlisle (1.00), Plumpton (1.05), Stratford (1.10), Taunton (12.50).

FRIDAY: Fontwell Park (1.10), Newbury (1.00), Newcastle (12.50), Warwick (12.45)

SATURDAY: Catterick Bridge (1.00), Folkestone (12.50), Newbury (BBC, 12.40), Nottingham (12.45), Wolverhampton (AW, 7.00).

Flat meetings in bold

WETHERBY

THUNDERER

12.50 Golden Torque. 1.20 Valiant Warrior. 1.50 Cool Luke. 2.20 Lo Stregone. 2.50 Cumbrian Challenge. 3.20 Tom Brodie.

GOING: GOOD SIS

12.50 CHRISTMAS NOVICES HURDLE

(£3,050: 2m) (14 runners)

1	0-1	COLONEL IN CHIEF 29 (D,S) F Murphy 5-11-5	P Carberry	91
2	3/F	ADMIRALS SEAT 17 M W Easterby 7-10-12	J Driscoll	⊞
3	0	ARTWORLD 17 M W Easterby 7-10-12	E Husband (3)	74
4	/3	BALHERNOCH 10 (BF) M H Easterby 6-10-12	L Wyer	–
5		CRACKHILL FARM 430F Mrs M Reveley 4-10-12	N Smith	–
6		DAJRAAN 670F N Twiston-Davies 6-10-12	C Maude	–
7	0	EURO THYNE 17 M H Easterby 5-10-12	R Garritty	–
8	45/	GOLDEN TORQUE 43F R Bastiman 8-10-12	H Bastiman (3)	–
9	-236	LEGAL LORD 10 M Hammond 5-10-12	D Bentley	72
10		LEIF THE LUCKY 188F Miss S Hall 6-10-12	N Bentley	–
11	35-0	PUREVALUE 17 M W Easterby 4-10-12	J Callaghan	75
12	0-	THE OTHER MAN 297 Miss L Siddall 5-10-12	M Newton (7)	–
13	33-0	THURSDAY NIGHT 10 J Fitzgerald 4-10-12	M Dwyer	84
14	0	WAKING 10 J Fitzgerald 4-10-12	E Callaghan (5)	–

7-4 Colonel In Chief, 4-1 Dajraan, 7-1 Crackhill Farm, 10-1 Admirals Seat, Balhernoch, 12-1 Thursday Night, 14-1 others.

1.20 SUPERMASTER HANDICAP CHASE

(£6,873: 2m 4f 110yd) (5)

1	2-F6	MORCELI 31 (D,G,S) H Johnson 7-11-13	L Wyer	91
2	1FF0	WIND FORCE 17 (C,D,F,G) G Richards 10-10-11	N Bentley	92
3	2-14	GNOME'S TYCOON 45 (CD,F,S) H Johnson 9-10-6	P Carberry	85
4	1-22	VALIANT WARRIOR 10 (D,F,S) M Hammond 7-10-0	D Bentley	⊞
5	-2UP	STRONG SOUND 10 (CD,F,S) P Cheesbrough 8-10-0	C Maude	84

7-4 Gnome's Tycoon, 2-1 Morceli, 5-2 Valiant Warrior 5-1 Wind Force, 12-1 Strong Sound.

1.50 ST JOHN AMBULANCE HANDICAP HURDLE

(£3,215: 3m) (12)

1	0-34	SWEET MIGNONETTE 58 (D,G) Mrs M Reveley 7-12-0	M Herrington (7)	89
2	10-0	GOLDEN HELLO 24 (D,F,G,S) M H Easterby 4-12-0	L Wyer	88
3	0000	WHITE WILLOW 10 (CD,F,S) Mrs M Reveley 6-11-11	Mr M H Naughton (7)	95
4	1-40	FOURTH IN LINE 18 (D,G,S) J Edwards 7-11-11	2nd pref	88
5	1-30	ALJADEER 17 (B,C,BF,F,G) M W Easterby 6-11-8	M Dwyer	91
6	-046	FRICKLEY 10 (D,G,S) F Murphy 9-11-7	P Carberry	92
7	14-0	COOL LUKE 31 (CD,F,S) G Moore 6-11-0	J Callaghan	⊞
8	/P5	BANK VIEW 17 (D,G,S) N Tinkler 10-10-12	R Garritty	–
9	-004	BLACKPATCH HILL 17 (CD,S) N Tinkler 6-10-7	E Husband (3)	90
10	/20	NATIVE FIELD 10 (D,F,S) J Fitzgerald 6-10-6	2nd pref	91
11	P24-	KANNDABIL 239 (CD,G,S) N Tinkler 8-10-4	Mrs A Farrell	–
12	3403	WEAVER GEORGE 29 (CD,F,G) J Hellens 5-10-4	2nd pref	90

7-2 Golden Hello, 4-1 Sweet Mignonette, 6-1 Aljadeer, 7-1 Fourth In Line, 8-1 Blackpatch Hill, Native Field, 10-1 White Willow, 12-1 others

2.20 ROWLAND MEYRICK HANDICAP CHASE

(£17,344: 3m 110yd) (9)

1	F-11	ONE MAN 17 (CD,F,G,S) G Richards 7-12-0	2nd pref	98
2	0-21	JODAMI 29 (D,F,G,S) P Beaumont 10-12-0	M Dwyer	92
3	-21U	YOUNG HUSTLER 10 (CD,BF,F,G,S) N Twiston-Davies 8-11-8	C Maude	91
4	3-62	MONSIEUR LE CURE 17 (D,G,S) J Edwards 9-11-5	2nd pref	89
5	-4P2	COGENT 17 (CD,F,G,S) J Glover 11-10-13	R Garritty	⊞
6	2-F6	MORCELI 31 (G,S) H Johnson 7-10-10	P Carberry	90
7	-211	SCOTTON BANKS 17 (CD,F,G,S) M H Easterby 6-10-3	L Wyer	96
8	43-1	LO STREGONE 24 (CD,F,G,S) T Tate 9-10-2	J Callaghan	94
9	0/5	CARBISDALE 18 (D,F,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 9-10-0	N Smith	–

11-4 One Man, 7-2 Jodami, 4-1 Young Hustler, 5-1 Monsieur Le Cure, 7-1 Scotton Banks, 8-1 Lo Stregone, 10-1 Cogent, 12-1 others

2.50 BOROUGHBRIDGE NOVICES CHASE

(£4,419: 2m) (4)

1	3113	CUMBRIAN CHALLENGE 10 (CD,BF,F,G,S) M H Easterby 6-11-12	L Wyer	⊞
2	/F-1	ASK TOM 19 (D,G,S) T Tate 6-11-9	R Garritty	90
3	116-	AMIGOS 290 (G,S) J Fitzgerald 7-11-4	M Dwyer	–
4	60-0	FIVE TO SEVEN 11 (S) C Thornton 6-11-4	P Carberry	–

11-10 Cumbrian Challenge, 5-4 Ask Tom, 4-1 Amigos, 25-1 Five To Seven.

3.20 BOXING DAY NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE

(£3,077: 2m 4f 110yd) (16)

1	-213	TOM BRODIE 28 (F,S) H Johnson 5-11-12	J Titley	90
2	4015	DESERT FIGHTER 20 (CD,BF,F) Mrs M Reveley 4-11-9	M Herrington (7)	⊞
3	22-5	CIRCUS LINE 10 M W Easterby 4-11-5	M Dwyer	90
4	-F12	RYE CROSSING 65 (F) M H Easterby 5-11-4	2nd pref	86
5	200-	AINSI SOIT IL 285 F Murphy 4-11-2	P Carberry	92
6	2564	HUNTERS' HEAVEN 18 J Mackie 4-10-13	E Husband (3)	92
7	P-05	VALLEY GARDEN 24 (B,G,S) J J O'Neill 5-10-9	D Bentley	95
8	0-50	ELA MAN HOWA 10 N Tinkler 4-10-8	L Wyer	84
9	/05	ALMAMZAR 11 N Tinkler 5-10-6	2nd pref	88
10	0-5P	THE GALLOPIN'MAJOR 24 Mrs M Reveley 5-10-4	N Smith	88
11	4-16	JUMBO STAR 68 (F) J Dixon 5-10-2	M Newton (7)	92
12	000	LEAP IN THE DARK 10 Miss L Siddall 6-10-0	C Maude	95
13	-251	OWENS QUEST 24 (CD,G) T Etherington 5-10-0	R Rourke (7)	94
14	00/	SCEPTICAL 661 J Glover 7-10-0	J Callaghan	–
15	-00U	NO WORD 11 (F) R Bastiman 6-10-0	H Bastiman (3)	–
16	00-2	MISTER TRICK 33 L Lungo 5-10-0	DOUBTFUL	72

7-2 Tom Brodie, 4-1 Rye Crossing, 8-1 Owens Quest, Desert Fighter, Ela Man Howa, 14-1 Circus Line, Jumbo Star, 16-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: Mrs M Reveley, 44 winners from 150 runners, 29.3%; N A Twiston-Davies, 5 from 18, 27.8%; H Johnson, 14 from 69, 20.3%; M H Easterby, 27 from 134, 20.1%; L Lungo, 3 from 15, 20.0%; G Richards, 22 from 112, 19.6%.

JOCKEYS: E Callaghan, 5 from 12, 41.7%; L Wyer, 35 from 151, 23.2%; M Dwyer, 18 from 156, 11.5%; D Bentley, 5 from 44, 11.4%; J Callaghan, 7 from 70, 10.0%; R Garritty, 7 from 70, 10.0%. Only qualifiers.

WINCANTON

THUNDERER

12.40 Silver Shred. 1.10 Smith's Band. 1.40 Top Cees. 2.10 Gales Cavalier. 2.45 The Carrot Man. 3.15 Anlace.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT SIS

12.40 FATHER CHRISTMAS FILLIES NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE

(£2,198: 2m) (7 runners)

1	0	FRANK IRISH 18 C Thorner 10-12	L Harvey
2	0036	GAME DILEMMA 21 J Mullins 10-12	R Greene
3		JOY FOR LIFE R Stronge 10-12	Mr M Rimell
4	420-	LUCIA FORTE 286 K Bailey 10-12	S McNeill
5	4-23	SILVER SHRED 6 (BF,F) M Pipe 10-12	D Burrows (7)
6	12	SUPREME KELLYCARRA 36 (F) J Gifford 10-12	L Aspell (5)
7	030	VALLINGALE 29 Miss H Knight 10-12	G F Ryan (5)

9-4 Silver Shred, 5-2 Lucia Forte, 11-4 Supreme Kellycarra, 8-1 others.

1.10 LORD STALBRIDGE MEMORIAL GOLD CUP

(Handicap chase: £7,165: 3m 1f 110yd) (7)

1	6-1U	YORKSHIRE GALE 10 (D,G,S) J Gifford 9-11-10	L Aspell (5)
2	-11F	SMITH'S BAND 24 (CD,BF,G,S) Mrs J Pitman 7-11-10	R Farrant
3	56-5	DONT TELL THE WIFE 12 (G,S) C Egerton 9-11-6	–
4	2-22	TOUREEN PRINCE 33 (G,S) Miss H Knight 12-11-3	Mr J Culloty (7)
5	321F	DUHALLOW LODGE 13 (G,S) C Brooks 8-11-1	S McNeill
6	/43-	CHRISTMAS GORSE 409 (S) C Brooks 9-11-0	Mr M Rimell
7	-405	GIVUS A BUCK 13 (B,C,D,F,G,S) P Hobbs 12-11-0	P Holley

2-1 Smith's Band, 5-2 Yorkshire Gale, 9-2 Dont Tell The Wife, 6-1 others

1.40 WINCANTON GOLD CARD HANDICAP HURDLE

(Qualifier: £5,471: 2m 6f) (21)

1	110-	ALLEGATION 264 (V,D,G,S) M Pipe 5-12-0	Mr A Farrant (5)
2	0-2P	ISLAND JEWEL 10 (D,S) C Bealby 7-11-4	M Bosley
3	021-	TAOS 238 (F,S) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-1	S Joynes (7)
4	2P0-	DO BE HAVE 237 (CD,G) Mrs J Pitman 7-10-5	R Farrant
5	00-0	GIVENTIME 24 (S) A Turnell 7-10-2	L Harvey
6	03-4	SENDAI 5 (F,G,S) J Gifford 8-10-2	L Aspell (5)
7	-1FF	PEATSWOOD 10 (F,G,S) M Channon 7-10-2	S Lyons (3)
8	61F-	TYRONE BRIDGE 370 (S) M Walker 9-10-0	Mr M Rimell
9	1120	RUNAWAY PETE 13 (F,G) M Pipe 5-10-0	Mr J Culloty (7)
10	-531	ROSINA MAE 39 (F,G) P Nicholls 6-10-0	Chris Webb (5)
11	2-U2	TOP CEES 17 (BF,G) Mrs J Ramsden 5-10-0	D Thomas (7)
12	503-	KHATIR 243 (F,G,S) M Pipe 4-10-0	Miss S Vickery
13	3141	EVER SMILE 52 (CD,F) M Pipe 5-10-0	O Burrows (7)
14	530-	SMUGGLER'S POINT 110F (F) P O'Sullivan 5-10-0	G F Ryan (5)
15	1/P	FRENCH CHARMER 24 (G,S) J Gifford 10-10-0	S McNeill
16	/6P-	TOP JAVALIN 238 (S) Mrs J Renfree-Barons 8-10-0	L Aspell (5)
17	5110	ELITE REG 42 (V,F,G,S) M Pipe 6-10-0	B Moore (7)
18	1211	PREENKA GIRL 5 (D,F,G,S) M Pipe 6-10-3 (6ex)	Scome Mitchell (5)
19	3/0-	THERMAL WARRIOR 307 (S) J Old 7-10-0	Mr G Barnes (7)
20	4161	TOUR LEADER 19 (F,G) R Buckler 6-10-0	G Supple (7)
21	-50P	LANSDOWNE 34 (D,S) P Nicholls 7-10-0	M Griffiths (7)

5-1 Preenka Girl, 6-1 Rosina Mae, 7-1 Top Cees, 8-1 Taos, Elite Reg, 10-1 Ever Smile, Do Be Have, Allegation, 12-1 others.

2.10 MID SEASON CHASE (£6,938: 2m 5f) (6)

1	P-22	GALES CAVALIER 31 (G,S) D Gandolfo 7-11-12	R Farrant
2	P-F5	MAD THYME 24 (CD,G,S) N Gaselee 8-11-4	Mr M Rimell
3	6318	MAGSOOD 21 (V,D,F,G) J Mullins 10-11-4	R Greene
4	1F-4	OVER THE POLE 34 (BF,G) J Gifford 8-11-4	S McNeill
5	P/0	FREDS MELODY 13 F Tucker 10-10-12	Chris Webb
6	P0/	KASHAN 568F (G) P Hayward 7-10-12	M Bosley

4-5 Gales Cavalier, 5-2 Over The Pole, 6-1 Mad Thyme, 12-1 Magsood, 33-1 Freds Melody, Kashan.

2.45 HARRY DUFOSEE HANDICAP CHASE

(£3,496: 2m) (6)

1	600-	LASATA 244 (D,G,S) P Hobbs 10-11-10	2nd pref
2	2112	THE CARROT MAN 21 (D,BF,G,F) P Winkworth 7-11-3	R Farrant
3	UF12	ZAJIRA 15 (D,F,G,S) P Eccles 5-11-2	Chris Webb (5)
4	5043	SUPER TACTICS 21 (D,G,S) R Alner 7-11-1	S McNeill
5	20-2	SOVEREIGN NICHE 25 (V,F,G,S) M Pipe 7-10-0	2nd pref
6	-302	EVENING RAIN 27 (D,F,G,S) R Hodges 9-10-0	Sophie Mitchell (5)

5-2 Zajira, 11-4 Sovereign Niche, 3-1 The Carrot Man, 5-1 Lasata, 7-1 Super Tactics, 8-1 Evening Rain.

3.15 STIRRUP CUP NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE

(£2,198: 2m) (16)

1	3/5-	FRONTAGER 491 C Egerton 5-12-0	Mr M Rimell
2	/41	CAWARRA BOY 27 (S) C James 7-11-11	2nd pref
3	F-02	GENERAL TONIC 13 D Gandolfo 8-11-7	Sophie Mitchell (5)
4	1162	ANLACE 17 (D,F,G) S Mellor 6-11-4	Chris Webb (5)
5	66-4	NO NEAR MISS 25 (S) D Elsworth 5-11-2	2nd pref
6	-023	LUCAYAN CAY 34 (BF) Mrs J Pitman 4-11-0	R Farrant
7	5F26	CASPIAN BELUGA 25 S Knight 7-10-13	S Burrough
8	40-6	WHISPERING COURT 62 A Turnell 5-10-12	G Crone (7)
9	3321	DONTDRESSFORDINNER 14 (F,G) C Popham 5-10-11	S Lyons (3)
10	0-16	TAMANDU 25 (D,G) C James 5-10-11	S McNeill
11	-U45	NEEDWOOD NATIVE 13 A J Wilson 7-10-0	L Harvey
12	6-6P	WHAT'S THE JOKE 43 J Tuck 6-10-0	Mr A Mitchell (7)
13	005-	URBAN LILY 231 R Hodges 5-10-0	L Aspell (5)
14	RP00	CARNIVAL KID 13 (B) R Scher 5-10-0	R Greene
15	-460	DISTANT HOME 24 (B) R Jones 7-10-0	Mr J Culloty (7)
16	P6-	CELTIC EMERALD 396 R Eckley 7-10-0	2nd pref

4-1 Anlace, 5-1 No Near Miss, General Tonic, 6-1 Whispering Court, 7-1 Lucayan Cay, 8-1 Cawarra Boy, 12-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: Mrs J Pitman, 22 winners from 69 runners, 31.9%; M Pipe, 35 from 126, 27.8%; R Alner, 11 from 52, 21.2%; Miss H Knight, 5 from 25, 20.0%; N Twiston-Davies, 10 from 51, 19.6%; D Gandolfo, 6 from 34, 17.6%; J Gifford, 15 from 88, 17.0%.

JOCKEYS: R Farrant, 5 winners from 41 rides, 12.2%; S McNeill, 8 from 67, 11.9%; P Holley, 10 from 88, 11.4%. Only qualifiers.

☐ There are ten acceptors, including the Kim Bailey-trained Cheltenham Gold Cup winer Master Oats, for the Ericcson Chase at Leopardstown on Thursday.

HEREFORD

THUNDERER

12.35 La Menorquina. 1.05 Three Philosophers. 1.35 Doc Cottrill. 2.05 Pimberley Place. 2.35 Hightown Cavalier. 3.05 Dantes Sun. 3.35 Silver Standard.

GOING. HEAVY

12.35 TURKEY NOVICES HURDLE

(Div I: £2,528: 2m 3f 110yd) (11 runners)

1	1	KING GIRSEACH 55 (S) K Bailey 6-11-5	A Thornton
2	3412	LA MENORQUINA 24 (G) D Marks 5-11-0	D Gallagher
3	0-05	LORD LOFTY 19 Mrs J Pitman 5-10-12	R Bellamy
4	05-0	RATATOUILLE ROAD 21 R Lee 5-10-12	P McLoughlin
5	PP0	STRONG GLEN 10 P Wegmann 7-10-12	S Fowler (7)
6	0/0	THE MEXICANS GONE 26 D Geraghty 7-10-12	V Slattery
7	0/0	WOODYOU 29 F Jordan 5-10-12	J Lodder
8	2-05	COOLE HILL 20 (G) D Nicholson 4-10-7	R Johnson (3)
9	F303	MOONLIGHT AIR 10 J Spearing 4-10-7	–
10	U2-	RUMI 238F C Egerton 4-10-7	2nd pref
11	3S-5	SPRING GRASS 34 B Ryall 7-10-7	T Dascombe (5)

5-2 King Girseach, 4-1 Rumi, 5-1 Moonlight Air, La Menorquina, 8-1 Coole Hill, 10-1 Lord Lofty, 14-1 others

1.05 TURKEY NOVICES HURDLE

(Div II: £2,528: 2m 3f 110yd) (10)

1	1	POTENTATE 24 (S) M Pipe 4-11-5	J Lower
2	3-1U	THREE PHILOSOPHERS 27 (CD,BF,G) T Forster 6-11-5	A Thornton
3	0350	ALLOW 15 B Llewellyn 4-10-12	D Matthews (5)
4	4-	PACIFIC POWER 614F A James 5-10-12	2nd pref
5	05	RAISE AND GAIN 13 N Twiston-Davies 4-10-12	C Llewellyn
6		REBEL PRIEST C Egerton 5-10-12	D Gallagher
7	FF3/	SOUND FORECAST 615P (S) Mrs S Johnson 7-10-12	R Johnson (3)
8	0	EMMA GRIMES 21 J Moore 4-10-7	G Upton
9	10-6	MISS OPTIMIST 26 (F) D Nicholson 5-10-7	R Johnson (3)
10	04	OATIS ROSE 24 M Sheppard 5-10-7	R Bellamy

5-4 Potentate, 4-1 Three Philosophers, 7-1 Miss Optimist, Raise And Gain, 10-1 Oatis Rose, Emma Grimes, 12-1 Rebel Priest, 14-1 others.

1.35 MINCE PIE SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE

(£1,940: 3m 2f) (9)

1	-U30	DOC COTTRILL 29 (S) N Twiston-Davies 5-12-0	C Llewellyn
2	P/F-	HYMER 248 (S) B Llewellyn 6-12-0	D Matthews (5)
3	-015	WAKT 19 (D,BF,F,S) J White 5-11-10	P McLoughlin
4	-225	WHITEBONNET 11 (B) C Egerton 5-11-9	D Gallagher
5	0230	COPPER COIL 24 W G M Turner 5-11-5	A Thornton
6	POP0	BOOGIE BOPPER 6 (V,S) M Pipe 6-11-0	J Lower
7	P/	THE TITAN GHOST 955 (G) S Coathup 6-10-10	Mark Brown (7)
8	0-00	FLYING IMP 22 (V) R Hollinshead 4-10-9	M W Martin (7)
9	3030	ITS GRAND 6 J Bradley 5-10-0	R Johnson (3)

11-4 Doc Cottrill, 3-1 Its Grand, 4-1 Whitebonnet, 5-1 Wakt, 7-1 Flying Imp, 10-1 Copper Coil, 16-1 others.

2.05 PLUM PUDDING NOVICES CHASE

(£2,879: 2m) (6)

1	3F41	PIMBERLEY PLACE 25 (G,S) N Twiston-Davies 7-11-7	C Llewellyn
2	24-3	CAPENWRAY 41 (G) J King 6-11-0	G Upton
3	0-P	DARK DIAMOND 153 H Kavanagh 5-11-0	T C Murphy (7)
4	10/	RIVER LOSSIE 650 (G,S) C Egerton 6-11-0	D Gallagher
5	/5-3	STEY SUNY 35 R Dickin 9-11-0	D Meredith
6	0-42	TRYING AGAIN 13 (BF,S) D Gandolfo 7-11-0	A Thornton

5-4 Pimberley Place, 9-4 Trying Again, 9-2 Capenwray, 6-1 River Lossie, 20-1 Stey Suny, Dark Diamond.

2.35 CAROL RICHARDSON BIRTHDAY NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,598: 2m 1f) (10)

1	/41	CAWARRA BOY 27 (CD,S) C James 7-12-0	Mr E James
2	3/5-	FRONTAGER 491 C Egerton 5-12-0	2nd pref
3	6-P4	BIETSCHHORN BARD 26 D Gandolfo 5-11-4	D Fortt (5)
4	0/3-	CARELESS FARMER 479 N Twiston-Davies 5-11-1	C Llewellyn
5	4311	HIGHTOWN CAVALIER 11 (C,G,S) R Hodges 4-11-0	J Harris (7)
6	2246	TENAYESTELIGN 55 D Marks 7-10-13	D Gallagher
7	0236	VALISKY 24 R Lee 5-10-9	P McLoughlin
8	P/0	MR POPPLETON 87 R Brotherton 6-10-3	R Bellamy
9	00-0	MUTAWALI 96 R Baker 5-10-0	V Slattery
10	P6-	CELTIC EMERALD 396 R Eckley 7-10-0	R Johnson (3)

3-1 Cawarra Boy, 7-2 Hightown Cavalier, 4-1 Bietschhorn Bard, 5-1 Careless Farmer, 8-1 Valisky, 12-1 Frontager, Tenayestelign, 16-1 others

3.05 TOTE NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE

(£3,269: 3m 1f 110yd) (9)

1	1-46	HOLY STING 24 (S) N Twiston-Davies 6-11-12	C Llewellyn
2	-F32	MOBILE MESSENGER 18 (S) T George 7-11-7	D Gallagher
3	3-53	BIG ARTHUR 11 D Nicholson 6-11-5	R Johnson (3)
4	SP26	PRIZE MATCH 10 (S) J Tuck 6-11-0	2nd pref
5	P/3	BALLYDOUGAN 15 (V) P Nicholls 7-11-0	T Dascombe (5)
6	F-62	DANTES SUN 32 (S) T Forster 6-10-8	A Thornton
7	-040	JIMMY'S FANCY 10 Mrs S Williams 7-10-0	G Upton
8	6-FP	LO-FLYING MISSILE 11 R Dickin 7-10-0	R Bellamy
9	0/P	UPTON LASS 34 C Nash 6-10-0	P McLoughlin

3-1 Dantes Sun, 7-2 Mobile Messenger, Prize Match, 4-1 Big Arthur, 8-1 Holy Sting, 10-1 Ballydougan, 16-1 Jimmy's Fancy, 25-1 others

3.35 HUGHES CATERERS HANDICAP HURDLE

(£2,906: 2m 3f 110yd) (15)

1	1-61	SPRING SAINT 25 (S) Miss C Horler 6-12-0	G Upton
2	20-P	STAR MOVER 10 (CD,G,S) C Smith 6-12-0	B Clarke (7)
3	5-04	MY SWAN SONG 15 (F,G) J Smith 10-11-11	A Thornton
4	-1F0	SILVER STANDARD 24 (C,G,S) T Forster 5-11-10	R Johnson (3)
5	5141	CORRIN HILL 11 (C,F,G,S) R Hodges 8-11-3	T Dascombe (5)
6	-605	FLY BY NORTH 20 (G,S) D Nicholson 7-11-9	X Aizpuru (7)
7	52/	RAGGERTY 627F (S) Miss K Whitehouse 5-11-3	W Humphreys
8	1/	BRAIDA BOY 937 (F,S) M Bradstock 9-11-0	2nd pref
9	00-0	SEVERN GALE 11 (S) F Jordan 5-10-13	Mr M Jackson
10	300-	FREE DANCER 248 (C,S) R Brotherton 5-10-7	C Llewellyn
11	-016	PROJECT'S MATE 11 (C,F,S) R Brown 8-10-2	P McLoughlin
12	-01P	CASSID'S BOY 15 (S) R Eckley 4-10-1	D Gallagher
13	-004	LEESWOOD 26 (V,F,S) R Lee 7-10-1	R Bellamy
14	-022	DANCING DANCER 28 (D,F) D Geraghty 6-10-0	V Slattery
15	5-F3	DORMSTON BOYO 22 T Wall 5-10-0	M Keighley (7)

3-1 Corrin Hill, 4-1 Spring Saint, 6-1 Fly By North, 7-1 Silver Standard, 8-1 My Swan Song, Dancing Dancer, 10-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: M Pipe, 30 winners from 100 runners, 30.0%; C Egerton, 3 from 10, 30%; N Twiston-Davies, 20 from 71, 28.2%; D Nicholson, 10 from 41, 24.4%; K Bailey, 15 from 75, 20.0%.

JOCKEYS: C Llewellyn, 15 winners from 59 rides, 25.4%; T Dascombe, 3 from 17, 17.6%; D Matthews, 3 from 21, 14.3%; P McLoughlin, 5 from 38, 13.2%; G Upton, 5 from 44, 11.4%.

☐ Newmarket's Cherry Hinton Stakes, which has produced two of the last three 1,000 Guineas winners in Sayyedati and Harayir, is to be upgraded to group two status from next year.

NEWTON ABBOT

THUNDERER

12.50 Tragic Hero. 1.20 Lemon's Mill. 1.50 No Near Miss. 2.30 Bramblehill Buck. 3.05 Ramstar. 3.35 Megamunch.

GOING: HEAVY

12.50 THURLESTONE HOTEL JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (£2,860: 2m 1f) (12 runners)

1	120	VOLUNTEER 20F (F) R O'Sullivan 11-5	Peter Hobbs
2		OUT RANKING 37 (D,S) M Pipe 11-0	D Bridgwater
3	0	BALLESWHIDDEN 33 B Smart 10-12	M Molloy (7)
4	2	CYRUS THE GREAT 19 (BF) K Bailey 10-12	J Magee (3)
5		FAUSTINO 10 P Hobbs 10-12	G McCourt
6	P0	FEISTY BOSS 67 N Twiston-Davies 10-12	T Jenks
7	400	GENUINE LEADER 10 (B) P Murphy 10-12	N Mann
8		GOLDEN POUND 75F Miss G Kelleway 10-12	A P McCoy
9	30	JARVEY 66 P Eccles 10-12	Muredach Kelly (7)
10		SAILEP 321F R Hodges 10-12	J Frost
11	U2	TRAGIC HERO 78F (BF,B) M Pipe 10-12	D Salter (5)
12	4	UNITED FRONT 45 R O'Sullivan 10-12	NON-RUNNER

7-4 Cyrus The Great, 3-1 Tragic Hero, 4-1 Out Ranking, 8-1 Faustino, 10-1 Volunteer, 12-1 Jarvey, 16-1 others.

1.20 EBF TATTERSALLS IRELAND MARES NOVICES CHASE (Qualifier: £3,201: 2m 5f 110yd) (10)

1	1P-P	BOURNEL 15 (V,S) C Barwell 7-11-0	N Mann
2	P0-P	DAVES DELIGHT 15 Miss Waterman 9-11-0	Mr G Shenkin (7)
3	2112	GALA'S PRIDE 83 (BF,F,G) N Twiston-Davies 8-11-0	T Jenks
4	FF23	GLENFINN PRINCESS 32 (S) Mrs M Jones 7-11-0	D Byrne
5	10-F	LEMON'S MILL 27 (BF,F,G,S) M Pipe 6-11-0	D Bridgwater
6	0-34	MYBLACKTHORN 15 (S) P Nicholls 5-11-0	A P McCoy
7	P-00	MYKI SU 25 (B,G) A Jones 7-11-0	Peter Hobbs
8	2P-3	PEARL'S CHOICE 25 J McConnochie 7-11-0	M Sharratt
9	5P26	PRIZE MATCH 10 (S) J Tuck 6-11-0	J Frost
10	3/1-	SISTER STEPHANIE 379 (G,S) Mrs M McCourt 6-11-0	–

5-4 Lemon's Mill, 4-1 Gala's Pride, 5-1 Pearl's Choice, 6-1 Sister Stephanie, 10-1 Glenfinn Princess, Myblackthorn, 12-1 Prize Match, 16-1 others.

1.50 EBF NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE

(Qualifier: £2,772: 2m 1f) (13)

1	10	WINSFORD HILL 32 (CD,G) P Hobbs 4-11-5	Peter Hobbs
2	0333	DAMAS 55 (B) M Pipe 4-11-0	D Bridgwater
3	0P	DANNY GALE 41 Mrs M McCourt 4-11-0	–
4	0-30	EL FREDDIE 18 J Old 5-11-0	T Jenks
5	0-66	HANGING GROVE 25 P Murphy 5-11-0	N Mann
6	0-	HILL CRUISE 278 N Ayliffe 6-11-0	M Molloy (7)
7	5-	CALLERMINE 255 R Buckler 6-10-9	G Tormey (3)
8	423	COME DANCE WITH ME 15 R Frost 5-10-9	J Frost
9	66-P	CRAVATE 13 Mrs J Mills 5-10-9	Mr R Mills
10	3FPP	FLEETING GLANCE 65 Miss L Wonnacott 6-10-9	Mr G Shenkin (7)
11	54-0	MISS FIRECRACKER 27 R Frost 6-10-9	R Darke
12	66-4	NO NEAR MISS 25 (S) D Elsworth 5-10-9	A McCabe
13	0/	PAPRIKA 884 A Newcombe 6-10-9	S Fox (5)

2-1 Damas, 4-1 Come Dance With Me, 8-1 Hanging Grove, No Near Miss, 10-1 El Freddie, Winsford Hill, 12-1 Danny Gale, 16-1 others

2.30 LANGSTONE CLIFF HOTEL HANDICAP CHASE (£3,485: 3m 2f 110yd) (8)

1	13-P	TERAO 25 (S) M Pipe 9-12-0	D Bridgwater
2	2-P5	JAILBREAKER 18 (CD,G,S) B Millman 8-11-12	D Salter (5)
3	-640	HILLWALK 12 (B,F,G,S) R Curtis 9-11-11	2nd pref
4	5503	KILLESHIN 12 (G,S) H Manners 9-11-2	Mr A Charles-Jones
5	11F1	BRAMBLEHILL BUCK 15 (B,C,S) P Nicholls 6-11-0	A P McCoy
6	P5-2	SILVERINO 25 (B,D,G,S) S Earle 9-10-11	Peter Hobbs
7	5-46	FIDDLERS PIKE 22 (S) Mrs R Henderson 14-10-11	Mrs R Henderson
8	-41F	ITS A SNIP 44 (B,D,G,S) C Mann 10-10-6	T Jenks

11-4 Bramblehill Buck, 3-1 Terao, 9-2 Killeshin, 6-1 Silverino, Jailbreaker, 12-1 Its A Snip, 14-1 others

3.05 CHRISTMAS PUDDING HANDICAP CHASE

(£3,095: 2m 110yd) (7)

1	P4-P	BENJAMIN LANCASTER 15 (C,D,G,S) M Griffin 11-11-10	N Mann
2	5-14	RAMSTAR 26 (F,S) P Hobbs 7-10-13	G Tormey (3)
3	/R6	MAPLE DANCER 15 (D,F,G) D Barons 9-11-4	Mr G Shenkin (7)
4	P-FP	TALE OF ENDURANCE 29 (S) C Mann 7-11-4	T Jenks
5	3542	CLEAR IDEA 15 (CD,F,G) R Frost 7-10-13	J Frost
6	0014	SUPREME MUSIC 27 (F) P Nicholls 6-10-12	A P McCoy
7	20-2	SOVEREIGN NICHE 25 (V,F,G,S) M Pipe 7-10-11	D Bridgwater

5-2 Ramstar, 3-1 Clear Idea, Sovereign Niche, 6-1 Supreme Music, 8-1 others.

3.35 ROYAL CASTLE HOTEL NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,738: 2m 6f) (11)

1	0PP1	CAVALERO 24 (S) H Manners 6-12-0	Mr A Balding (7)
2		HIGHEST ROOTS 85F M Pipe 4-12-0	D Bridgwater
3	3-30	MELLION PRIDE 24 P Hobbs 7-11-7	G Tormey (3)
4	BF-6	FOX ON THE RUN 32 (B) A Turnell 8-11-0	A P McCoy
5	3/6	YOUNG TESS 55 N Babbage 5-10-12	N Mann
6	20-2	MR PLAYFULL 13 R Frost 5-10-6	J Frost
7	00-2	MEGAMUNCH 34 R Juckes 7-10-0	D Salter (5)
8	0F6-	HAILE DERRING 208 N Twiston-Davies 5-10-0	T Jenks
9	P0-6	CELTIC REG 11 Mrs H Parrott 5-10-0	–
10	.P	OLD DEER PARK 44 (G) P Jones 9-10-0	Mr M Burrows
11	0P-0	VEXFORD MODEL 188 V Greenway 5-10-0	M Griffiths (7)

5-2 Mellion Pride, 4-1 Fox On The Run, Haile Derring, Young Tess, 8-1 others.

WOLVERHAMPTON

THUNDERER

1.00 Herbert Buchanan. 1.30 Church Law. 2.00 Captain Khedive. 2.40 Malwood Castle. 3.10 Preston Guild. 3.40 Let's Get Lost.

GOING: GOOD SIS

1.00 PERTEMPS NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE

(£5,623: 2m 4f 110yd) (7 runners)

1	3P1U	SOPHISM 11 (B,F,G,S) M Pipe 6-11-11	Jamie Evans
2	-443	CORLY SPECIAL 21 (B,F,G,S) K Burke 8-11-9	A Lamach (3)
3	4121	JUDICIAL FIELD 11 (F,S) N Tinkler 6-11-9	J Railton
4	B3-2	EARLY DRINKER 12 (G) O Sherwood 7-11-6	J A McCarthy
5	40U1	FENWICK 19 (D,F,G,S) R Hodges 8-11-4	A Tory
6	1242	HERBERT BUCHANAN 7 (F) P Nicholls 5-10-12	A Dobbin
7	U5F3	CRACKING IDEA 22 (G) J Edwards 7-10-7	B Fenton (5)

3-1 Fenwick, 7-2 Judicial Field, 9-2 Herbert Buchanan, Sophism, 8-1 Early Drinker, Cracking Idea, 12-1 Corly Special.

1.30 DEEPFIELDS NOVICES CHASE

(£7,058: 3m 1f) (6)

1	1121	ADDINGTON BOY 47 (D,F,G,S) G Richards 7-12-1	A Dobbin
2	-231	CHURCH LAW 11 (D,G) Mrs L Taylor 8-11-5	B Fenton
3	1-F1	MYLAND 41 (B,G) O Sherwood 6-11-5	J A McCarthy
4	1P-4	QUITE A MAN 13 (F,S) W Jenks 7-11-4	J Railton
5	00/P	ARRANGE A GAME 7 (B) N Littmoden 8-11-0	B Clifford
6	00-3	HAG'S WAY 53 J Edwards 5-10-13	A Tory

Evens Addington Boy, 9-4 Myland, 3-1 Church Law, 14-1 Hag's Way, 20-1 Quite A Man, 25-1 Arrange A Game

2.00 HARRY BROWN MEMORIAL CHALLENGE CUP HANDICAP CHASE (£13,810: 2m) (7)

1	1-4F	CLAY COUNTY 39 (D,BF,F,G,S) M Hammond 10-12-0	A Dobbin
2	54-5	YOUNG SNUGFIT 10 (D,F,G,S) O Sherwood 11-11-9	J A McCarthy
3	1F11	TIME WON'T WAIT 18 (D,F,G) R Phillips 6-10-10	J Railton
4	P5P-	GAMBLING ROYAL 249 (G,S) P Pritchard 12-10-8	P Pritchard
5	1212	CAPTAIN KHEDIVE 24 (D,F,G,S) P Nicholls 7-10-8	B Clifford
6	600-	LASATA 244 (D,G,S) P Hobbs 10-10-0	R Davis
7	1721	NEWHALL PRINCE 10 (D,F,G) A Streeter 7-10-0	Gary Lyons

2-1 Time Won't Wait, 9-4 Captain Khedive, 7-2 Clay County, 8-1 Young Snugfit, 10-1 Newhall Prince, 16-1 Lasata, 33-1 Gambling Royal.

2.40 JTS (INTERNATIONAL) NOVICES HURDLE

(£2,640: 2m 4f 110yd) (13)

1	3-15	DANZIG ISLAND 27 (F) W Jenks 4-11-6	A Dobbin
2	3-21	MALWOOD CASTLE 34 (D,G) R Alner 5-11-6	B Fenton (5)
3	3-12	STORM NORTH 18 (D,F) Miss V Williams 5-11-6	R Davis
4	P0-6	CELTIC REG 11 Mrs H Parrott 5-11-0	2nd pref
5	4/5	FINE STALKER 11 D Caro 7-11-0	J A McCarthy
6	4-24	FLASHMAN 41 B Llewellyn 5-11-0	Mr J L Llewellyn
7	-42P	ICE COLD IN ALEX 24 W Jenks 4-11-0	–
8	00-2	MEGAMUNCH 34 R Juckes 7-11-0	2nd pref
9	4P	PHILATELIC 29 R Alner 4-11-0	J Railton
10	6P-0	RELAXED LAD 10 J Peacock 6-11-0	Philip Hughes (7)
11	P-0C	RIGHT ANGLE 41 (V) Miss M Rowland 4-11-0	Gary Lyons
12	002	WEEHEBY 10 M Barraclough 6-11-0	–
13	06-U	BODFARI PRODUCER 29 J Edwards 5-10-9	A Tory

3-1 Malwood Castle, 4-1 Storm North, 5-1 Weeheby, 7-1 Danzig Island, Bodfari Producer, 14-1 Celtic Reg, Right Angle, 16-1 others

3.10 LIFTING GEAR & TOOL HIRE SELLING HURDLE (£2,493: 2m) (15)

1	14U5	EXCLUSION 22 (D,F) J Hetherton 6-11-6	2nd pref
2	-1F3	PRESTON GUILD 47 (D,BF,F) S Earle 5-11-6	J Railton
3	2104	SAXON MAGIC 47 (F,S) J Bennett 5-11-1	B Fenton (5)
4	3450	AMBER VALLEY 15 D Williams 4-11-0	A Dobbin
5	0-40	DANCE ON SIXPENCE 11 J Peacock 7-11-0	Philip Hughes (7)
6	00-P	DUVEEN 11F (BF) J White 5-11-0	B Clifford
7	02	LATIN LEADER 27 C Egerton 5-11-0	J A McCarthy
8	F-0	M'BEBE 193 G Fierro 5-11-0	–
9	0P	NORD LYS 29F B Llewellyn 4-11-0	Mr J L Llewellyn
10	-000	NORTHERN SINGER 40 R Hodges 5-11-0	A Tory
11	0020	RAFTER-J 18 J A Harris 4-11-0	2nd pref
12	0332	TONY'S MIST 7 (BF) J Bradley 5-11-0	A Lamach (3)
13	2266	ZAHID 53 K Burke 4-11-0	DOUBTFUL
14	-006	RUGRAT 13 B Preece 5-10-9	Gary Lyons
15	05-P	SHE KNEW THE RULES 180 D Carey 5-10-9	R Davis

4-1 Amber Valley, 9-2 Preston Guild, 6-1 Latin Leader, Saxon Magic, 7-1 Exclusion, 8-1 Tony's Mist, 14-1 others.

3.40 HAGUE FASTENERS HANDICAP HURDLE

(£4,272: 2m) (10)

1	1324	WINDWARD ARIOM 11 (D,F,G,S) K Burke 9-12-0	A Lamach (3)
2	6213	ELFLAA 21 (D,BF,F) H Henderson 4-12-0	M Lane (7)
3	5422	TEJANO GOLD 40 (D,G,S) P Bradley 5-11-13	J Railton
4	1233	NORDIC VALLEY 12 (D,BF,F,G,S) M Pipe 4-11-3	Jamie Evans
5	6-13	LET'S GET LOST 17 (D,F) J A Harris 6-11-4	B Fenton (5)
6	412-	SARMATIAN 139F (D,F,G) M Hammond 4-10-12	A Dobbin
7	P14U	SASSIVER 21 (B,D,F,G) P Kelleway 5-10-9	2nd pref
8	U244	THROWER 13 B Preece 4-10-3	Gary Lyons
9	1-46	DAILY SPORT GIRL 40 (D,G,S) B Llewellyn 6-10-2	Mr J L Llewellyn
10	0551	CHRIS'S GLEN 13 (V,D,F,G) J Bradley 6-10-0	B Clifford

7-2 Tejano Gold, 4-1 Elflaa, Let's Get Lost, 5-1 Sassiver, 7-1 Windward Ariom, Chris's Glen, 8-1 others.

SEDGEFIELD

THUNDERER

12.40 South Westerly. 1.10 Pride Of May. 1.40 Irish Gent. 2.10 Cross Cannon. 2.40 Premier First. 3.10 Fly To The End.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM

12.40 JOHN WADE NOVICES HURDLE

(£2,262: 3m 3f 110yd) (12 runners)

1	1111	SOUTH WESTERLY 20 (CD,F,G) Mrs M Reveley 7-12-2	G Cahill (7)
2	-F12	RYE CROSSING 65 (C,F) M H Easterby 5-11-4	F Perratt
3	030	AVOWHAT 6 J J O'Neill 5-10-12	R McGrath (7)
4	5P	BARNSTORMER 45 (G) E Elliott 9-10-12	2nd pref
5	2-06	BUYERS DREAM 33 J Hellens 5-10-12	S Taylor (7)
6	2	DAVID'S WAY 28 M Hammond 6-10-12	R Burns (7)
7	PP5-	GAYTON RUN 232 S Campion 6-10-12	2nd pref
8	0-40	KINGS MINSTRAL 28 D Lamb 5-10-12	A Manners (7)
9	0	MASKIN BROOK 20 W Barker 7-10-12	G Harker
10	-231	NEW CHARGES 6 (G) P Beaumont 8-10-12	R Supple
11	0-2	SHALLOW RIVER 33 R Collins 4-10-12	D Ryan (7)
12	P-P	VINES CROSS 29 T Carr 7-10-12	Mr C Mulhall

9-4 South Westerly, 5-2 David's Way, 9-2 Rye Crossing, 5-1 Shallow River, 8-1 Avowhat, 14-1 New Charges, 20-1 Buyers Dream, 33-1 others.

1.10 CHRISTMAS TREE HANDICAP HURDLE

(£2,355: 2m 5f 110yd) (9)

1	3601	LIVIO 10 (CD,F,G,S) L Lungo 4-12-2	F Perratt
2	13-4	PRIDE OF MAY 45 (V,S) C Fairhurst 4-11-12	Mr K Whelan (5)
3	1160	VAL DE RAMA 31 (CD,F,G) Denys Smith 6-11-8	D Ryan (7)
4	2-P3	TOPOTHENORTHRACING 34 (BF,S) P Beaumont 5-10-8	R Supple
5	04-0	SKI PATH 10 N Bycroft 6-10-0	D Towler (7)
6	0-00	PIER THIRTY NINE 13 (F,G,S) J Parkes 9-10-0	Mr R Hale
7	3-U0	RUA ROS 11 (S) Mrs S Smith 5-10-0	Mr P Murray (7)
8	0-60	HIGH PENHOWE 6 J Quinn 7-10-0	G Cahill (7)
9	545	RUBY ROCK 18 B Murray 3-10-0	O Pears

2-1 Livio, 11-4 Pride Of May, 7-2 Topothenorthracing, 5-1 Val De Rama, 14-1 Ski Path, Rua Ros, 20-1 others.

1.40 NORTH YORKSHIRE BREWING COMPANY BORO BEST HANDICAP CHASE (£3,579: 3m 3f) (12)

1	1101	IFFEEE 10 (CD,F,S) P Bowen 8-12-2	2nd pref
2	4-0P	HABTON WHIN 13 (CD,G) M H Easterby 9-11-12	F Perratt
3	4316	TWIN STATES 10 (CD,BF,F,G,S) J Turner 6-11-7	W Fry
4	F1F-	SPARROW HALL 233 (F,G,S) J Fitzgerald 8-11-4	W Dwan
5	2-33	CARSON CITY 28 (BF,G) Mrs M Reveley 8-10-6	G Cahill (7)
6	33-4	CALL THE SHOTS 29 J Wade 6-10-4	O Pears
7	P1-5	JENDEE 36 (CD,S) J Hellens 7-10-2	Mr K Whelan (5)
8	2321	ANDROS GALE 36 (F) J Howard Johnson 6-10-1	H Taylor
9	2/31	IRISH GENT 34 (F,G) F Easterby 9-10-2	R Supple
10	3200	BLAZING DAWN 20 (CD,F,G,S) J Hubbuck 8-10-2	G Harker
11	3563	FORWARD GLEN 22 (F) P Cheesbrough 8-10-0	A Manners (7)
12	-053	SHUIL SAOR 11 (F) Mrs S Smith 8-10-0	Mr P Murray (7)

2-1 Irish Gent, 4-1 Iffeee, 5-1 Andros Gale, Sparrow Hall, 6-1 Carson City, 10-1 Twin States, 14-1 Call The Shots, 25-1 others.

2.10 RENT ROLL CUP HANDICAP CHASE

(£2,702: 2m 1f) (6)

1	3-3U	CROSS CANNON 47 (C,D,F,G) J Hellens 9-12-0	Mr K Whelan (5)
2	-214	THE TOASTER 20 (F,G,S) J Quinn 9-11-5	G Cahill (7)
3	P-60	TRESIDDER 54 (CD,F,G,S) M W Easterby 13-11-3	Mr S Swiers
4	1324	BRIAR'S DELIGHT 11 (B,F,G) R Allan 7-10-10	S Melrose (7)
5	433-	PORT IN A STORM 239 (S) M Hammond 6-10-8	R Burns (7)
6	26/6	MACCONACHIE 11 M Dods 8-10-8	R Supple

9-4 The Toaster, 11-4 Port In A Storm, 7-2 Briar's Delight, 4-1 Cross Cannon, 8-1 Tresidder, 25-1 Macconachie

2.40 NORTH YORKSHIRE BREWING COMPANY FLYING HERBERT MAIDEN CHASE (£2,929: 2m 5f) (8)

1	-P40	ARCTICTALDI 8 Mrs A Swinbank 5-11-10	R Supple
2	00'	CHARLIE TRUMPER 979 W McKeown 7-11-10	A Stanford
3	5	CHOISTY 65 Mrs A Swinbank 5-11-10	2nd pref
4	F2/F	GREENFIELD MANOR 10 J Wade 6-11-10	D Ryan (7)
5	0-05	PREMIER FIRST 33 J Hellens 7-11-10	Mr K Whelan (5)
6	052F	STRETCHIT 24 (B) D McCain 5-11-10	D McCain
7	2-P	WOODVILLA 20 T Carr 7-11-10	Mr C Mulhall
8	U-56	JUST MOLLY 20 W Reed 8-11-5	G Cahill (7)

6-4 Greenfield Manor, 7-2 Woodvilla, 6-1 Arctictaldi, 8-1 Choisty, Charlie Trumper, Stretchit, 10-1 others.

3.10 ST STEPHEN HANDICAP HURDLE

(£2,303: 2m 1f 110yd) (9)

1	3403	WEAVER GEORGE 29 (F,G) J Hellens 5-11-13	S Taylor (7)
2	-3F0	SHARKASHKA 17 (CD,F,G) M H Easterby 5-11-12	G Cahill (7)
3	0P-6	GLENUGIE 24 (CD,F) G Moore 4-11-10	N Bentley
4	0-04	STATELY HOME 10 P Bowen 4-10-13	W Fry
5	6FR1	BOLANEY GIRL 22 (F) F Murtagh 6-10-7	R Supple
6	5-P0	PRINCE SKYBURD 42 M Avison 4-10-4	W Dwan
7	-536	FLY TO THE END 11 (V,S) J Quinn 5-10-1	O Pears
8	012F	CADEAUX PREMIERE 34 (BF,F) Denys Smith 4-10-0	D Ryan (7)
9	33-0	JENDORCET 11 C Fairhurst 5-10-0	F Perratt

6-4 Sharkashka, 7-2 Bolaney Girl, 4-1 Cadeaux Premiere, 5-1 Weaver George, 10-1 Stately Home, 14-1 Glenugie, 20-1 Prince Skyburd, 25-1 others

AYR

THUNDERER

12.25 Old Red. 12.55 Cutthroat Kid. 1.25 Forbidden Time. 1.55 Colorful Ambition. 2.25 Stormy Coral. 2.55 Strong Mint.

GOING: GOOD (INSPECTION 11.30 TOMORROW) SIS

12.25 AULD LANG SYNE MAIDEN HURDLE

(£2,155: 2m 4f) (14 runners)

1	0	CELTIC GIANT 10 L Lungo 5-11-5	R Hodge
2	36	DAWN ROCK 8 (B) R McKellar 4-11-5	D Parker (3)
3	6326	EXPLORE MONDIAL 34 (V) T Dyer 4-11-5	A Linton (7)
4	00-4	JAUNTY GENERAL 17 C Parker 4-11-5	B Storey
5	P-	MUSIC BLITZ 383 Mrs D Thomson 4-11-5	J Burke
6	5-PP	NAUGHTY FUTURE 29 (G,S) J J O'Neill 6-11-5	M Moloney
7		OLD RED 52F Mrs M Reveley 5-11-5	P Niven
8	121-	SANTA CONCERTO 276 (S) L Lungo 6-11-5	T Reed
9	P/	SOUTHEND FLUTTER 1169 N Mason 8-11-5	J Supple (3)
10	06-	THE KHOINOA 269 Mrs A Swinbank 5-11-5	–
11	63	TRUE SCOT 29 P Cheesbrough 5-11-5	B Harding (3)
12	00	YOUNG KENNY 17 P Beaumont 4-11-5	B Grattan (7)
13	66-0	CRAIGIE RAMBLER 33 D Robertson 6-11-0	I Jardine (7)
14		FOXLAW K Oliver 6-11-0	S Melrose (7)

6-4 Old Red, 7-2 Santa Concerto, 5-1 Jaunty General, 8-1 Celtic Giant, 10-1 Explore Mondial, 12-1 Naughty Future, 14-1 True Scot, 16-1 others.

12.55 TENNENTS LAGER HANDICAP HURDLE

(£2,824: 2m 4f) (8)

1	015-	ARAGON AYR 326 (C,S) P Monteith 7-11-10	B Bowens (5)
2	-634	TRUMP 17 (CD,G,S) C Parker 6-11-8	D Parker (3)
3	542-	CODOLI LANE 238 (CD,S) Mr J Dun 8-11-2	B Harding (3)
4	2-63	CUTTHROAT KID 17 (V,D,F,G) Mrs M Reveley 5-11-1	P Niven
5	/0-0	IFALLELSEFAILS 10 (D,F) L Lungo 7-11-0	T Reed
6	-004	BLACKPATCH HILL 17 (S) N Tinkler 6-10-12	2nd pref
7	3-00	NICHOLAS PLANT 29 (CD,S) J Goldie 6-10-6	A Watt (7)
8	1-15	JOHNS THE BOY 45 (CD,G,S) N Mason 9-10-3	J Supple (3)

7-4 Cutthroat Kid, 7-2 Trump, 4-1 Blackpatch Hill, 6-1 others.

1.25 GALLOWAY PONY CLUB NOVICES CHASE

(£2,851: 2m 4f) (8)

1	-211	FORBIDDEN TIME 11 (F,G,S) L Lungo 7-11-12	T Reed
2	4/2-	CAITHNESS CLOUD 363 (S) C Parker 7-11-0	B Storey
3	5	CHOISTY 65 Mrs A Swinbank 5-11-0	–
4	60-0	FIVE TO SEVEN 11 (S) C Thornton 6-11-0	2nd pref
5	32-2	LOCHNAGRAIN 17 (S) Mrs M Reveley 7-11-0	P Niven
6	242-	MAJOR BELL 234 (F,G,S) A Whillans 7-11-0	M Moloney
7	20-3	MONTRAVE 46 (G) P Monteith 6-11-0	B Harding (3)
8	03P5	STRONG MEASURE 22 (F) P Cheesbrough 7-11-0	D Parker (3)

6-4 Forbidden Time, 9-4 Lochnagrain, 9-2 Five To Seven, 8-1 others

1.55 TENNENTS 80/- ALE HANDICAP HURDLE

(£2,233: 2m) (10)

1	1134	WILD ROSE OF YORK 20 (D,F,G) P Monteith 4-12-0	B Harding (3)
2	04	COLORFUL AMBITION 17 Mrs A Swinbank 5-12-0	–
3	0-50	ELA MAN HOWA 10 N Tinkler 4-11-10	2nd pref
4	1-PP	CHUMMY'S SAGA 10 (F) L Lungo 5-11-6	T Reed
5	0-40	CANAAN VALLEY 33 D Robertson 7-11-7	J Burke
6	2162	STEADFAST ELITE 13 (BF,G) J J O'Neill 4-11-6	M Moloney
7	6FR1	BOLANEY GIRL 22 (D,F) F Murtagh 6-11-5	2nd pref
8	3561	MARCO MAGNIFICO 10 (D,F) T Dyer 5-11-4	P Niven
9	4250	THISONESFORALICE 11 J Goldie 7-10-4	A Watt (7)
10	0400	MEADOWLECK 34 W Young 6-10-0	R Murphy

11-4 Colorful Ambition, 7-2 Marco Magnifico, 4-1 Wild Rose Of York, 5-1 Bolaney Girl, 7-1 Steadfast Elite, 8-1 Ela Man Howa, 10-1 others

2.25 FESTIVE SEASON NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£2,853: 3m 1f) (10)

1	1-11	SEVEN TOWERS 18 (D,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 6-12-0	P Niven
2	-211	ROCKET RUN 22 (D,F,G,S) Miss L Russell 7-11-6	T Reed
3	63-1	STORMY CORAL 46 (C,G,S) C Parker 5-10-9	B Storey
4	-221	JUKE BOX BILLY 20 (F,G) P Monteith 7-10-9	B Harding (3)
5	0-32	IVY HOUSE 34 (BF,G,S) J J O'Neill 7-10-8	2nd pref
6	PP6-	PADDY MORRISSEY 326 J Haldane 8-10-6	J Burke
7	36-6	D'ARBLAY STREET 28 (B,S) W Kemp 6-10-3	M Moloney
8	4-50	COOL WEATHER 34 P Cheesbrough 7-10-0	B Grattan (7)
9	P033	SEEKING GOLD 29 J Barclay 6-10-0	–
10	P/0	ISLAND RIVER 29 C Parker 7-10-0	D Parker (3)

2-1 Stormy Coral, 11-4 Seven Towers, 4-1 Rocket Run, 8-1 Ivy House, 10-1 Juke Box Billy, D'Arblay Street, 25-1 others.

2.55 YOUNG ENTRY STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,488: 2m) (11)

1	1-62	CITTADINO 28 (G) C Thornton 5-11-11	N Horrocks (7)
2	1	SWANBISTER 10 (G) L Lungo 5-11-11	T Reed
3		GALE FORCE P Beaumont 4-11-4	B Grattan (7)
4		PHAR ECHO L Lungo 4-11-4	I Jardine (7)
5		STRONG MINT Mrs M Reveley 4-11-4	P Niven
6	4-	BAREFOOT LANDING 329 C Parker 4-10-13	D Parker (3)
7		BILL'S PRIDE P Monteith 4-10-13	B Harding (3)
8	2-22	DECENT PENNY 10 Mrs M Reveley 6-10-13	C McCormack (7)
9		DERRYVALE GIRL T Dyer 4-10-13	A Linton (7)
10	6-5	MARTHA BUCKLE 39 J Goldie 6-10-13	A Watt (7)
11		SMART APPROACH Mrs M Reveley 5-10-13	R Hodge

5-2 Strong Mint, 3-1 Swanbister, 9-2 Smart Approach, 5-1 Decent Penny, 6-1 Cittadino, 10-1 Phar Echo, Gale Force, 16-1 others

COURSE SPECIALISTS

NEWTON ABBOT: Trainers: J Tuck, 3 winners from 6 runners, 50.0%; J Old, 7 from 20, 35.0%; R O'Sullivan, 9 from 26, 34.6%; D Elsworth, 3 from 9, 33.3%; P Hobbs, 41 from 137, 29.9%; M Pipe, 93 from 324, 28.7%; P Nicholls, 24 from 94, 25.5%; R Curtis, 4 from 19, 21.1%; C Mann, 3 from 15, 20.0%; K Bailey, 9 from 47, 19.1%; N Twiston-Davies, 10 from 54, 18.5%; C Barwell, 4 from 26, 15.4%. Jockeys: G Tormey, 4 winners from 15 rides, 26.7%; D Bridgwater, 20 from 78, 25.6%; Peter Hobbs, 25 from 107, 23.4%; B Clifford, 9 from 42, 21.4%; T Jenks, 4 from 24, 16.7%; A P McCoy, 10 from 62, 16.1%.

SEDGEFIELD: Trainers: P Bowen, 3 winners from 3 runners, 100.0%; Mrs M Reveley, 67 from 221, 30.3%; J Fitzgerald, 17 from 59, 28.8%; M H Easterby, 20 from 89, 22.5%; L Lungo, 9 from 40, 22.5%; J J O'Neill, 12 from 54, 22.2%; J Hellens, 14 from 66, 21.2%; P Cheesbrough, 4 from 22, 18.2%; P Beaumont, 14 from 85, 16.5%; G Moore, 21 from 132, 15.9%; J Johnson, 21 from 154, 13.6%; M Dods, 3 from 26, 11.5%; Denys Smith, 11 from 97, 11.3%; M W Easterby, 6 from 56, 10.7%. Jockeys: D Towler, 3 winners from 8 rides, 37.5%; F Perratt, 4 from 35, 11.4%. Only qualifiers.

WOLVERHAMPTON: Trainers: O Sherwood, 5 winners from 12 runners, 41.7%; J Edwards, 4 from 19, 21.1%; M Pipe, 6 from 30, 20.0%. Only qualifiers. Jockeys: no qualifiers

Congested schedule undermines St Helens's chances

By Christopher Irvine

ST HELENS embark on four matches in 11 days over the holiday period a pale shadow of the side that was threatening Wigan at the top of the rugby league Stones Championship and has reached the semi-finals of the Regal Trophy.

A team ravished by injuries and the suspension of Bobbie Goulding, the captain, face Wigan at Central Park on Boxing Day, is at home to Leeds on New Year's Day and, in between, entertain Warrington twice in a week, with a Regal Trophy final place at stake next Saturday.

"The fixture planning has made impossible demands on clubs: the players aren't robots and it's tragic for supporters when clubs turn out weakened teams," Eric Hughes said. The lament of the St Helens coach is a familiar one about too many matches, a criticism also levelled at the centenary season yesterday by John Kear, the Rugby Football League coaching executive.

Kear trusts that lessons will be learnt for the Super League that starts in March. "A loss of quality on the park — and that is what we will get if we play too many games — will lead to a decline in gates and make if more difficult to attract sponsorship," Kear said.

With more than two-thirds of the 33 professional clubs showing a fall in attendances this season, warning notices are already out. Kear is anxious to replace quantity with a quality-equals-revenue theory.

This is inherent in the leaner summer Super League, but how the Challenge Cup can be bolted to the framework, and whether the Regal Trophy will be retained next year, has yet to be worked out.

Meanwhile, a quart into the centenary season pint pot has left St Helens licking their wounds. They have eight players on the casualty list. Paul Newlove, the recent world record £500,000 signing, was added to it, along with Anthony Sullivan, the club's leading try scorer, in the midweek defeat at Castleford that virtually ended any championship aspirations. Newlove tore tendons in his right foot and it could be mid-January before he reappears.

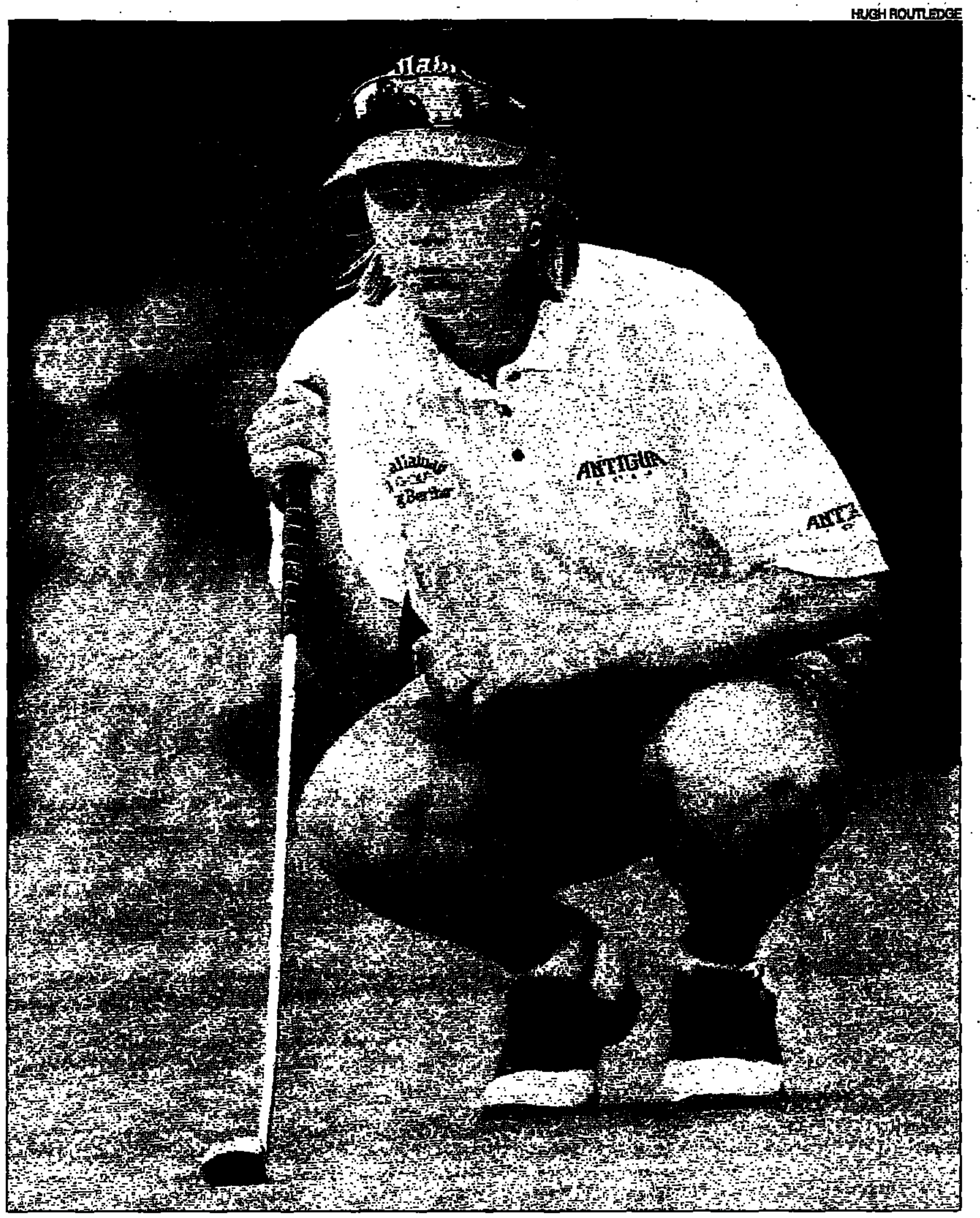
In exchanging Sonny Nickle, Paul Loughlin and Bernard Dwyer to Bradford as part of the Newlove deal, St Helens lost a lot of experience. Young shoulders will carry even more of a burden at Wigan on Tuesday should Sullivan and Chris Joynt, the outstanding forward this season, fail to recover.

Abandoning studies helped to earn place in golfing history

Sorenstam savours master-stroke

John Hopkins on the Swedish rookie who defied tradition and went on to rule the roost in 1995

HUGH ROUTLEDGE



Sorenstam dominated women's golf in a way that has never been done before, and may never be again

At different places around the world and at different moments during the year now drawing darkly to a close, Corey Pavin, Nick Faldo, Ben Crenshaw and Colin Montgomerie achieved wondrous results in golf. All four, however, were overshadowed by the performances in the United States and Europe of a slight, numerate woman who comes from the cold of Stockholm and lives in the sunbelt of Arizona.

Annika Sorenstam's golf in 1995 was better than Pavin's four-wood on the 72nd hole of the US Open, Faldo's par-four on the 18th hole of his singles in the Ryder Cup, Crenshaw's emotional victory in the Masters, and Montgomerie's third successive victory in the European order of merit. Day in and day out, Sorenstam, 25, dominated women's golf on two continents in a way that has never been done before, and may never be done again. Little wonder that signs reading "Well done Annika" sprouted on roadsides in Sweden, and that she was recently named Sweden's sports personality of the year.

Perhaps the full measure of Sorenstam's achievement in becoming the first golfer, male or female, to win the order of merit on both sides of the Atlantic in the same year, has not yet been felt. Certainly, Sorenstam has not yet come to terms with it. "I am still treading on clouds," she said yesterday as she prepared for a Christmas in Phoenix, with her parents, her fiancé and her cat, Nelson. "I thought I might be lucky once in my career, but I never thought I could do it all in one year."

Among the Swedes, Sorenstam is not as vivacious as Helen Alfredsson nor as well known as Liselotte Neumann, who won the US Women's Open in 1988. She has neither the length nor the drawing power of Laura Davies, nor the exuberance of Florence Descampe. What she has done best, and deserves to be remembered for, is improve, probably quicker than anyone in golf history.

In 1993, she was a young professional in Europe, and was named rookie of the year. She was then, as she is now, quietly spoken, thoughtful and neat; that Swedish rarity, a golfer who plays quickly. It was also noticeable that she lifted her head slightly before impact, which caused some to predict that she would never amount to anything. In 1994, she travelled to the United States and won the same title on the US LPGA Tour, as well as finishing runner-up in five events in Europe.

By tradition, rookies in the United States struggle in their second and third seasons. Sorenstam did not. This year, she played golf that nobody could match, though Davies gave it a characteristically spirited attempt, and finished second to Sorenstam in the United States and Europe. Sorenstam had two victories in Europe, three in the United States, icluding the US Women's Open and a victory by ten strokes in an event in St Louis. "What course was Annika playing on?" Nancy Lopez asked. Sorenstam defeated Davies in a play-off to win the world championship in South Korea in October and then, capping an astonishing year, she won the Australian Masters.

Sorenstam believes that abandoning her college career at the University of Arizona was the first significant step towards the improvement that enabled her to leapfrog over so many of her rivals. Giving up studying nutrition meant that she could turn professional. Late in 1994, she won a tournament in Australia and, in June, her first in Europe. The effect was astonishing. Her confidence rocketed. "I had no fears," she said. "I felt I could see no limits. I was not under any pressure. I was completely relaxed."

Helping her confidence to a hitherto unknown level was her engagement, last June, to David Esch, an American who plays off scratch and works for Callaway, the club manufacturer. Sorenstam talks unashamedly of the feelings of security and happiness that she has experienced since then. "Now I have something else other than golf in my life," she said in her soft voice down the transatlantic telephone. "Everything is in harmony when I come home. Somebody cares, somebody matters. It is so nice to pick up the telephone and talk to someone you love."

Sorenstam was looking forward to going to the airport to meet her parents, who were flying in from Sweden. "It's a lovely day here," she reported, with a smile in her voice. "It's a little cloudy at present but the temperature will get up to the 70s later on. It will be just a Swedish summer's day. My parents will bring Swedish ham and meatballs, cheese and bread. These are the Swedish specialities I miss over here."

The Christmas shopping was completed, the presents placed prominently around the tree. "We open our presents on the 24th," Sorenstam said. "I've just had a look at them. They are not all for me. We always say we should try not to give so many, but we never seem to achieve that."

Next year, Sorenstam will move to Nevada, to a house that she has just bought. "It is a very beautiful place," Sorenstam said. "It is very, very peaceful. It will help me when I have time off to get away. That is what I need. There is a lake. The mountains are beautiful. I will do a lot of fishing, hiking. I try to encourage myself to do things outside golf."

These include spending time working on a computer. Sorenstam, who speaks excellent English, is numerate in a way that comes as a surprise. She likes computer printouts and spreadsheets. She understands them. Then one discovers that her father worked for IBM, and that, for four years, the Sorenstams lived in west London. The cat's name owes its origin to the Sorenstams' time in London.

> 'I am still treading on clouds. I never thought I could do it in a year'

Sorenstam does her accounts on her computer, makes notes of her expenses, and has an e-mail number. She is as at home in front of a screen and tapping away at a keyboard as she is on the tees and greens of a golf course; and there is a link between the two, because for years she has kept detailed statistics of her golf — how accurately she has been driving, how many putts for each round. She spends hours comparing her performances in years gone by with her form.

"My strengths are my consistency," she said. "I do not make many mistakes. I hit 14 greens a round on average this year and, on average, I missed only one fairway. My putting is pretty good, too. I used to think it was not very good, but this year I was fourth on the LPGA putting statistics, so I guess I can putt quite well after all. Perhaps my chipping is a weakness."

She laughed, quietly. The day was just beginning in Arizona. There was much work to be done. "It will be tough for me in 1996," she said, by way of farewell. "My goal in 1995 was to do well in Europe. My goal in 1996 is to focus more on the LPGA tour in the US."

IN BRIEF

Aggressive Wiberg makes up lost ground

PERNILLA WIBERG, of Sweden, won a women's skiing World Cup slalom in aggressive style in Veysonnaz, Switzerland, after finishing thirteenth in the first leg. The former Olympic giant slalom champion clocked an aggregate time of 1min 14.42sec for the two legs to claim the eighth slalom win of her World Cup career.

Wiberg started third in the 47-gate second leg and clocked 34.64sec, then watched with increasing elation from the finish area as rival after rival failed to match her time. Kristina Andersson, her compatriot, who led after the first leg, slipped back to third place overall, with a total time of 1min 14.73sec. She was 0.01sec behind Urska Hrovat, of Slovenia, who had also finished second in the slalom in St Anton, Austria, on Sunday.

Alexandra Meissnitzer, of Austria, who did not race the slalom, retained the overall World Cup lead with 488 points.

Big contingent

Cycling: Great Britain will have the eighth largest team of the 54 nations accepted for the Olympic Games in Atlanta next year, with qualifying places for 19 men and women in the 11 events which, for the first time, will include mountain bikes and be open to professionals.

Chris Boardman, Britain's first Olympic gold medal-winner, in the 1992 Games in Barcelona, does not anticipate defending his 4,000 metres pursuit title — because of a clash with the Tour de France — but will be the No 1 choice for the 52-kilometres road time-trial, a discipline in which he won the world title in 1994.

Benn hits target

Sport on television: Nigel Benn's world title contest with Gerald McClellan, of the United States, won the 1995 battle of the sports television ratings. ITV — which screened seven of the top ten sports programmes this year — had 13.1 million viewers for the super-middleweight bout at the London Arena in February. That was more than a million viewers more than watched the Grand National on BBC in April, which came second.

Ellis returns

Rugby union: Kevin Ellis, the Wales and Great Britain rugby league scrum half, will return to rugby union on Boxing Day when he makes his debut for Maesteg against Bridgend, his former club.

HUNTINGDON

THUNDERER

12.30 Hatcham Boy. 1.00 Second Call. 1.30 Alaskan Heir. 2.00 Maneree. 2.30 Ask Me Kindly. 3.00 Newhall Prince. 3.30 The Captain's Wish.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (SOFT IN PLACES)

12.30 FESTIVE SPIRIT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (Div I: £1,891: 3m 2f) (13 runners)

1	0-1	MERILENA 35 (C,F) G Hubbard 5-11-0	K Gaule (3)
2	5P	BARNSTORMER 45 (G) E Elliott 9-10-12	T Eley
3	4-64	CAMP BANK 39 N Twiston-Davies 5-10-12	D Walsh (5)
4	0P/	CAPITAIN 241P A Jones 6-10-12	S Curran (3)
5	3P	DODGEM 24 M Wilkinson 7-10-12	M Richards
6	PP5-	GAYTON RUN 232 S Campion 6-10-12	P Midgley (3)
7	2-0F	HATCHAM BOY 39 D Nicholson 5-10-12	R Massey (5)
8	056	JUST ALBERT 24 Mrs J Pitman 5-10-12	T Grantham
9	-050	KING'S COURTIER 24 S Mellor 6-10-12	J Ryan
10	0-2	SHALLOW RIVER 33 R Collins 4-10-12	2nd pref
11	0/0	STARLIGHT FOOL 32 K Bailey 6-10-12	J R Kavanagh
12	P0-5	ARDENT LOVE 24 O Brennan 6-10-7	S O'Donnell (7)

7-2 Merilena, 4-1 Shallow River, Camp Bank, 5-1 Hatcham Boy, 10-1 Ardent Love, Just Albert, 12-1 others.

1.00 CHRISTMAS TIDE NOVICES CHASE (£3,225: 2m 4f 110yd) (12)

1	0P-1	FALMOUTH BAY 33 (G,S) S Sherwood 6-11-7	2nd pref
2	-621	SOLO GENT 35 (CD,F,G) A Jones 6-11-7	2nd pref
3	5421	VICOSA 38 (F,S) R Alner 6-11-7	P Carey (5)
4	50P-	BALAAT 279 (F) M Chapman 7-11-0	2nd pref
5	40/	I'M TOBY 661 (G) A Foster 8-11-0	2nd pref
6	2-P0	MAESTRO PAUL 24 (F,G,S) J Gifford 9-11-0	Mr P O'Keeffe (7)
7	5642	NAGOBELIA 19 (F,G,S) J Pearce 7-11-0	J McLaughlin
8	6-50	RIVER ISLAND 17 (S) J Old 7-11-0	T Grantham
9	3U54	STRONG JOHN 14 (F,G) G Hubbard 7-11-0	K Gaule (3)
10	0-42	TRYING AGAIN 13 (BF,S) D Gandolfo 7-11-0	2nd pref
11	5-24	GARRYLOUGH 24 (G) D Gandolfo 6-10-9	M Richards
12	30-F	SECOND CALL 41 (BF,F,S) T Forster 6-10-9	J R Kavanagh

3-1 Trying Again, 7-2 Second Call, 5-1 Falmouth Bay, 8-1 Solo Gent, 8-1 River Island, Vicosa, 10-1 others.

1.30 CHRISTMAS BOX HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,268: 2m 5f 110yd) (16)

1	0-F4	TAMERGALE 56 (BF,S) N Twiston-Davies 6-11-13	D Walsh (5)
2	1-56	IL BAMBINO 15 (S) H Manners 7-11-12	Mr A Wintle (7)
3	5PU-	BADRAKHANI 244 (C,G,S) C Nash 9-11-8	J R Kavanagh
4	4505	PLATO'S REPUBLIC 17 (C,F) J Jenkins 4-11-8	E Murphy
5	1/	BRAIDA BOY 937 (D,F,S) M Bradstock 8-11-8	R Thornton (7)
6	0-43	ALASKAN HEIR 12 (G,S) A Streeter 4-11-7	T Eley
7	1-40	GAMEFULL GOLD 14 (F,G) S Dow 6-11-6	A Dicken
8	-U10	HI HEDLEY 24 (F) G Hubbard 5-11-5	K Gaule (3)
9	/06-	CARRIG DANCER 230 S Sherwood 7-11-2	S Curran (3)
10	600-	CAMBO 241 (D,G,S) M Banks 9-11-1	M Richards
11	-251	OWENS QUEST 24 (G) T Etherington 5-10-12	2nd pref
12	1-P5	BLAKE'S WONDER 52 (F) R Alner 5-10-7	P Carey (5)
13	000-	EYRE POINT 259 Mrs J Pitman 6-10-5	R Massey (5)
14	05-0	LOFTY DEED 19 (S) W Musson 5-10-4	S Keightley
15	-600	RED LIGHTER 10 J Old 6-10-2	T Grantham
16	5060	PONTEVECCHIO BELLA 14 (S) Mrs L Jewell 9-10-0	W Walsh (7)

9-2 Owens Quest, 5-1 Hi Hedley, 6-1 Alaskan Heir, 7-1 Braida Boy, 8-1 Badrakhani, 10-1 Il Bambino, 12-1 others.

2.00 Q103 HANDICAP CHASE (&2,997: 3m) (8)

1	11-2	RECTORY GARDEN 60 (C,D,S) T Forster 6-11-12	J R Kavanagh
2	P1-1	KILFINNY CROSS 46 (C,D,F,G,S) J Pearce 7-11-11	J McLaughlin
3	15-1	DISTINCTIVE 13 (S) M Wilkinson 6-11-5	T Grantham
4	4-61	MANEREE 19 (CD,F,G,S) N Callaghan 8-11-3	D Gallagher
5	-3PF	BUCKSHOT 12 (G,S) J Gifford 7-11-1	Mr P O'Keeffe (7)
6	3P-2	SEDGE WARBLER 21 Mrs P Robeson 8-10-10	M Richards
7	21-5	SPROWSTON BOY 19 (D,F,G,S) M Chapman 12-10-4	2nd pref
8	564-	SIMWELL 365 (CD,G) G Hubbard 7-10-3	K Gaule (3)

5-2 Maneree, 3-1 Kilfinny Cross, 7-2 Distinctive, 4-1 Rectory Garden, 5-1 Sedge Warbler, 12-1 Buckshot, 14-1 others.

2.30 FESTIVE SPIRIT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (Div II: £1,877: 3m 2f) (11)

1	0PP1	CAVALERO 24 (S) H Manners 6-11-5	2nd pref
2	3	ASK ME KINDLY 24 O Sherwood 7-10-12	M Richards
3	3-4P	FIFTH FUSILIER 12 (B) Miss A Embiricos 8-10-12	J Ryan
4	P-	FLOTATION 248 John Berry 8-10-12	D Morris
5	35-0	JULTARA 15 (S) J Edwards 6-10-12	J R Kavanagh
6	00U0	MILO BOY 6 M Chapman 4-10-12	2nd pref
7	PF-0	NETHERCOTE LAD 10 M Wilkinson 5-10-12	K Gaule (3)
8	66-4	SPACEAGE GOLD 38 J Old 6-10-12	T Grantham
9	-4UP	SPIKEY 24 (G) J Jenkins 9-10-12	E Murphy
10	/43-	MISS NOSEY OATS 396 K Burke 7-10-7	R Massey (5)
11	F	THIRD MELODY 21 (F) J Mullins 9-10-7	S Curran (3)

7-2 Ask Me Kindly, 9-2 Cavalero, 5-1 Third Melody, Jultara, Miss Nosey Oats, 7-1 Spaceage Gold, 12-1 Spikey, 16-1 others.

3.00 BOXING DAY HANDICAP CHASE (£2,651: 2m 110yd) (5)

1	6135	RUPPLES 6 (D,F,G) M Chapman 8-11-10	W Worthington
2	2513	DRIVING FORCE 7 (B,CD,F) Mrs McCourt 9-11-8	M Richards
3	1121	NEWHALL PRINCE 10 (D,F,G) A Streeter 7-11-8	2nd pref
4	/1/	WYLAM 664 (F,G,S) J Gifford 8-11-8	Mr P O'Keeffe (7)
5	6431	FIERCE 12 (D,F,G,S) J Jenkins 7-11-7	E Murphy

2-1 Newhall Prince, 3-1 Wylam, 7-2 Driving Force, Fierce, 9-2 Rupples.

3.30 MISTLETOE STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,690: 2m 110yd) (15)

1		BLUSTERY DAY R Alner 5-11-4	P Carey (5)
2	3	BRAMLEY MAY 27 R Williams 5-11-4	S Keightley
3	6	CARDINAL RULE 21 J Edwards 6-11-4	J R Kavanagh
4	3-2	CHAI-YO 14 J Old 5-11-4	T Grantham
5		CORRIMULZIE K Morgan 4-11-4	S Ryan (7)
6	00	EQUESTRIANISM 5 J Pearce 4-11-4	J McLaughlin
7		GIPSY GEOF G Hubbard 4-11-4	K Gaule (3)
8		HIJACK Miss A Embiricos 4-11-4	J Ryan
9	0	LINDA'S PRINCE 12 O Brennan 6-11-4	S O'Donnell (7)
10		OPTIMISTIC AFFAIR A Streeter 4-11-4	T Eley
11		SAFEGLIDE J Gifford 5-11-4	Mr P O'Keeffe (7)
12	8	THE CAPTAIN'S WISH 27 D Nicholson 4-11-4	R Massey (5)
13	5	COMPUTERAID LADY 18 R Curtis 5-10-13	D Morris
14	30-	FLEXWING 304 T Holland-Martin 5-10-13	M Richards
15		ZEN OR J Mullins 4-10-13	S Curran (3)

4-1 Chai-Yo, Bramley May, 6-1 Safeglide, The Captain's Wish, 8-1 others

Trainers' preferences

The following is a list of horses doubly declared on Boxing Day. They will run at their second preference meeting only if the first preference is abandoned. A horse's second preference is denoted on the racecard.

Almamzar Market Rasen 3.35. Balaat Market Rasen 12.55; Barnstormer Huntingdon 12.30; Blackpatch Hill Wetherby 1.50; Boloney Girl Sedgefield 3.10; Braida Boy Huntingdon 1.30; Caithness Cloud Ayr 1.25; Carson City Sedgefield 1.40; Cavalero Newton Abbot 3.35; Cawarra Boy Hereford 2.35; Celtic Emerald Hereford 2.35; Celtic Reg Newton Abbot 3.35; Choisty Ayr 1.25; Ela Man Howa Wetherby 3.20; Exclusion Market Rasen 12.25, Falmouth Bay Kempton 2.50; Five To Seven Wetherby 2.50, Fourth In Line Kempton 1.45; Frontager Wincanton 3.15, Gayton Run Huntingdon 12.30; Habton Whin Sedgefield 1.40. Hillwalk Market Rasen 2.00, I'm Toby Market Rasen 3.05, Iffeee Market Rasen 2.50, Ivy House Market Rasen 12.55; Lasata Wolverhampton 2.00; Let's Get Lost Wolverhampton 3.40; Megamunch Newton Abbot 3.35; Milo Boy Market Rasen 1.25, Monsieur Le Cure Kempton 2.20, Native Field Market Rasen 2.30; Newhall Prince Wolverhampton 2.00; No Near Miss Newton Abbot 1.50; One Man Kempton 2.20, Owens Quest Wetherby 3.20, Pacific Power Market Rasen 3.35, Pearl's Choice Newton Abbot 1.20, Pride Of May Sedgefield 1.10, Prize Match Newton Abbot 1.20, Rafter-J Market Rasen 12.25, Ruml Market Rasen 1.25, Rye Crossing Sedgefield 12.40; Sassiver Market Rasen 2.30, Sesame Seed Kempton 3.20; Shallow River Sedgefield 12.40; Solo Gent Kempton 1.15, Sovereign Niche Newton Abbot 3.05, Sprowston Boy Market Rasen 2.00; Stormy Coral Ayr 2.25; Trying Again Hereford 2.05; Weaver George Sedgefield 3.10.

MARKET RASEN

THUNDERER

12.25 Kimberley Boy. 12.55 Quiet Mistress. 1.25 Kingdom Of Shades. 2.00 High Padre. 2.30 Nocatchim. 3.05 Artic Wings. 3.35 Lucy Tufty.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES)

12.25 MISTLETOE SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (£1,786: 2m 1f 110yd) (13 runners)

1	2231	BRACKENTHWAITE 8 (G) L Lungo-James 5-12-5 (7ex)	R McCarthy (7)
2	14U5	EXCLUSION 22 (F) J Hetherton 6-12-0	R Marley
3	5-02	TREVVEETHAN 19 Mrs S Austin 6-11-6	D Wilkinson
4	3-PP	ERLEMO 40 (V,C,S) W Clay 6-11-3	Guy Lewis (3)
5	/P	DUBLIN INDEMNITY 12 (B,D,G) M Bielby 6-10-13	F Leahy (3)
6	F-41	KIMBERLEY BOY 27 (F) Mrs M Reveley 5-10-12	G Lee (3)
7	0-30	WATER DIVINER 87 (F,G) K Wingrove 5-10-11	J Ryan
8	6006	SMART DEBUTANTE 12 (F) Miss S Wilton 6-10-8	M Foster
9	P03	KINDAKOOLA 20 M Chapman 4-10-7	W Worthington
10	0020	RAFTER-J 18 J A Harris 4-10-7	A S Smith
11	00-5	DREAM START 7 Mrs S Smith 5-10-6	R Guest
12	00-0	SALUTATION 16 (V) T Kersey 4-10-0	Susan Kersey
13	0P-0	THOMAS RAND 29 M Dods 6-10-0	W McFarland

3-1 Kimberley Boy, 9-2 Brackenthwaite, 5-1 Exclusion, 7-1 Trevveethan, 8-1 Kindakoola, 10-1 Dream Start, 12-1 others

12.55 BRUCE CARR MEMORIAL TROPHY NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£3,860: 3m 1f) (14)

1	2-33	CARSON CITY 28 (BF,G) Mrs M Reveley 8-12-0	2nd pref
2	1P06	RUSTINO 13 (B,C,G,S) W Cunningham 9-11-11	J Supple (3)
3	3F11	PERUVIAN GALE 12 (D,F,G) Mrs S Smith 6-11-11	R Guest
4	63-1	STORMY CORAL 46 (G,S) C Parker 5-11-10	2nd pref
5	12-2	QUIET MISTRESS 28 (S) W Bethell 5-11-9	A S Smith
6	35/	OCEAN LEADER 643 (F) Mrs D Haine 8-11-9	G Hogan (3)
7	0-32	IVY HOUSE 34 (BF,G,S) J J O'Neill 7-11-8	A Roche (3)
8	-326	FINAL BEAT 21 J Curtis 6-11-8	L O'Hara
9	2-64	NATIVE MONY 24 M Hammond 6-11-8	Mr C Bonner (3)
10	-PF5	SOLOMAN SPRINGS 11 (B,F) Mrs V Ward 5-11-3	W McFarland
11	UB-3	KIBBY BANK 34 J Howard Johnson 6-10-13	F Leahy (3)
12	50P-	BALAAT 279 (F) M Chapman 7-10-10	W Worthington
13	44-P	APRIL CITY 13 (B,S) C Smith 6-10-9	M Ranger
14	6P-0	GOLD PIGEON 87 B Rothwell 6-10-3	D J Kavanagh (5)

3-1 Peruvian Gale, 5-1 Stormy Coral, Quiet Mistress, 7-1 Ivy House, Ocean Leader, 8-1 Kibby Bank, 10-1 Rustino, 12-1 others

1.25 SANDILANDS GOLFING HOLIDAYS MAIDEN HURDLE (£2,915: 2m 3f 110yd) (16)

1	0-26	AH THERE YOU ARE 38 (BF) K Bailey 6-11-5	W McFarland
2	4	ALCIAN BLUE 24 M Hammond 4-11-5	Mr C Bonner (3)
3	26-6	BE BRAVE 12 T Etherington 5-11-5	I Lawrence
4		COUNT OF FLANDERS 790F K Morgan 5-11-5	A S Smith
5	4	HONEY MOUNT 11 N Walker 4-11-5	R Guest
6	0-	JASONS FARM 234 W Clay 5-11-5	Guy Lewis (3)
7	5-23	KINGDOM OF SHADES 12 A Turnell 5-11-5	L O'Hara
8	00-6	MACS HERO 10 C Smith 5-11-5	M Ranger
9	020	MAJOR SIOUX 10 Mrs S Smith 4-11-5	R Wilkinson (7)
10	00U0	MILO BOY 6 M Chapman 4-11-5	W Worthington
11	1/	PHILHARMONIC 957 (F) J Fitzgerald 7-11-5	F Leahy (3)
12	05	SWISS TACTIC 29 A Jessop 6-11-5	G Lee (3)
13	00-	GILDORANS LASS 274 J Upson 4-11-0	J Supple (3)
14	2-1	HENRIETTA HOWARD 36 (F) Mrs D Haine 5-11-0	G Hogan (3)
15	0-40	OLD BETSY 10 Mrs S Smith 5-11-0	L McGrath (7)
16	U2-	RUMI 238F C Egerton 4-11-0	M Brennan

2-1 Kingdom Of Shades, 4-1 Ruml, 5-1 Henrietta Howard, 7-1 Ah There You Are, 8-1 Alcian Blue, 10-1 Honey Mount, 12-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

MARKET RASEN. Trainers: P Kelleway, 3 winners from 5 runners, 60.0%. A Turnell, 3 from 8, 37.5%; M H Easterby, 22 from 77, 28.6%. A Bailey, 8 from 28, 28.6%; J Pearce, 4 from 15, 26.7%. Jockeys: Mr C Bonner, 3 winners from 8 rides, 37.5%; A Roche, 3 from 10, 30.0%. L O'Hara, 6 from 36, 16.7%.

HUNTINGDON. Trainers: K Bailey, 14 winners from 43 runners, 32.6%. D Gandolfo, 9 from 29, 31.0%. D Nicholson, 15 from 52, 28.8%. Jockeys: A Dicken, 4 winners from 14 rides, 28.6%, D Gallagher, 7 from 37, 18.9%. J Ryan, 7 from 39, 17.9%.

2.00 LINCOLNSHIRE NATIONAL (Handicap chase: £10,601: 4m 1f) (10)

1	-111	HIGH PADRE 10 (C,F,G,S) J Fitzgerald 9-11-7	F Leahy (3)
2	-3UU	DARK OAK 10 (C,G,S) J Curtis 9-11-2	L O'Hara
3	0-44	DO BE BRIEF 12 (G,S) Mrs J Pitman 10-11-1	I Lawrence
4	-PF1	MATT REID 10 (C,F,G,S) J Leigh 11-10-11	Mr W Morgan
5	-640	HILLWALK 12 (B,F,G,S) R Curtis 9-10-10	A Thornton
6	1101	IFFEEE 10 (F,S) P Bowen 8-10-8	R Guest
7	4-0P	HABTON WHIN 13 (G) M H Easterby 9-10-4	2nd pref
8	2-P5	DIAMOND FORT 13 (CD,F,G,S) J McConnochie 10-10-4	M Brennan
9	33-4	PENNINE PRIDE 13 (G,S) M Hammond 8-10-0	Mr C Bonner (3)
10	21-5	SPROWSTON BOY 19 (F,G,S) M Chapman 12-10-0	W Worthington

6-4 High Padre, 9-2 Matt Reid, 5-1 Iffeee, 7-1 Do Be Brief, 10-1 Pennine Pride, 12-1 Diamond Fort, 16-1 others.

2.30 ROSELAND GROUP KILVINGTON HANDICAP HURDLE (£4,913: 2m 3f 110yd) (16)

1	410-	CASH CHASE 263 (CD,F,G,S) O Brennan 7-11-12	M Brennan
2	/21	SESAME SEED 17 (D,G,S) Mrs J Cecil 7-11-12	2nd pref
3	5554	BRAMBLEBERRY 17 (G,S) Mrs S Smith 6-11-8	R Guest
4	30-5	TEST MATCH 43 (CD,G,S) W Clay 8-11-5	Guy Lewis (3)
5	255-	VASILIEV 234 (F,S) S Gollings 7-11-5	J Supple (3)
6	13-4	PRIDE OF MAY 45 (V,S) C Fairhurst 4-10-12	2nd pref
7	/20	NATIVE FIELD 10 (F,S) J Fitzgerald 6-10-11	F Leahy (3)
8	22-0	MARSH'S LAW 24 (CD,F,G,S) O Brennan 8-10-9	G Lee (3)
9	6-13	LET'S GET LOST 17 (F) J A Harris 6-10-9	2nd pref
10	1114	CAN CAN CHARLIE 19 (C,BF,F,G) J Pearce 5-10-9	V Smith
11	1332	NOCATCHIM 21 (V,F,G,S) K Morgan 6-10-4	A S Smith
12	22-5	JUST SUPPOSEN 21 (F) B Rothwell 4-10-3	L O'Hara
13	P14U	SASSIVER 21 (B,CD,F,G) P Kelleway 5-10-0	G Hogan (3)
14	46-0	BOLD AMBITION 18 T Kersey 8-10-0	Susan Kersey
15	0-03	TRISTAN'S COMET 12 (C,G,S) J L Harris 8-10-0	W McFarland
16	023P	BRITANNIA MILLS 10 (F) M Chapman 4-10-0	W Worthington

11-4 Sesame Seed, 9-2 Sassiver, 6-1 Native Field, Vasiliev, 7-1 Can Can Charlie, 8-1 Cash Chase, 10-1 others.

3.05 BET WITH THE TOTE NOVICES CHASE (Qualifier: £4,042: 2m 4f) (11)

1	-34F	MR FUDGE 6 (D,F,G) Mrs J Brown 8-11-9	E Callaghan
2	22-1	ARTIC WINGS 19 (F,G,S) O Brennan 7-11-7	M Brennan
3	54-U	ANOTHER VENTURE 11 (S) F Murphy 5-11-5	M Foster
4		APOLLO COLOSSO A Turnell 5-11-5	Mr C Storey
5	500-	BUSKING ALONG 221 F Murphy 6-11-5	D J Kavanagh
6	4/2-	CAITHNESS CLOUD 363 (S) C Parker 7-11-5	2nd pref
7	/P/	COPPER CABLE 704 C Smith 8-11-5	M Ranger
8	/2-F	GARRISON COMMANDER 40 (BF) A Turnell 6-11-5	L O'Hara
9	2P-F	GOING AROUND 26 (G,S) K Bailey 7-11-5	W McFarland
10	40/	I'M TOBY 661 (G) A Foster 8-11-5	R Guest
11	2P-3	PEARL'S CHOICE 25 J McConnochie 7-11-0	2nd pref

11-4 Artic Wings, 4-1 Going Around, 5-1 Pearl's Choice, 6-1 Garrison Commander, 7-1 Caithness Cloud, 8-1 Mr Fudge, 10-1 others.

3.35 CHRISTMAS SPIRIT NOVICES CLAIMING HURDLE (£2,136: 2m 1f 110yd) (15)

1	/05	ALMAMZAR 11 N Tinkler 5-11-4	A S Smith
2		JUST FLAMENCO 8F M Ryan 4-11-4	R Guest
3	4-	PACIFIC POWER 814F A James 5-11-4	J Supple (3)
4	22F2	LUCY TUFTY 19 (CD,G) J Pearce 4-11-3	V Smith
5	4/5	PRINCESS MAXINE 6 J J O'Neill 6-11-3	A Roche (3)
6	4511	STAC-POLLAIDH 22 (F) K Bailey 5-11-3	W McFarland
7	5-5U	DUGORT STRAND 38 O Brennan 4-11-0	M Brennan
8	F015	LITTLE BLACKFOOT 20 (CD,BF,S) J L Harris 7-10-10	I Lawrence
9	R0/	THE ADJUTANT 750 F Murphy 7-10-10	M Foster
10	0	CELTIC CEILIDH 20 Mrs M Reveley 4-10-9	G Lee (3)
11	00-	SCOTTISH WEDDING 390 (V) W Clay 5-10-9	Guy Lewis (3)
12	P	HEALTHY RISK 17 T Kersey 4-10-6	Susan Kersey
13	0	TREE OF TIME 83 J Norton 4-10-6	E Callaghan (5)
14	0P	BUZZARDS HALL 10 M Chapman 5-10-5	W Worthington
15		TAUFELIANE 399F J L Harris 4-10-5	G Hogan (3)

3-1 Stac-Pollaidh, 5-1 Celtic Ceilidh, 6-1 Dugort Strand, Lucy Tufty, 7-1 Princess Maxine, 8-1 Almamzar, 10-1 Little Blackfoot, 12-1 others

☐ Two horses — the Les Eyre-trained Greek Night Out and Mick Ryan's Stevie's Wonder — are set to lose races after traces of banned substances were found in their urine samples.

THE TIMES

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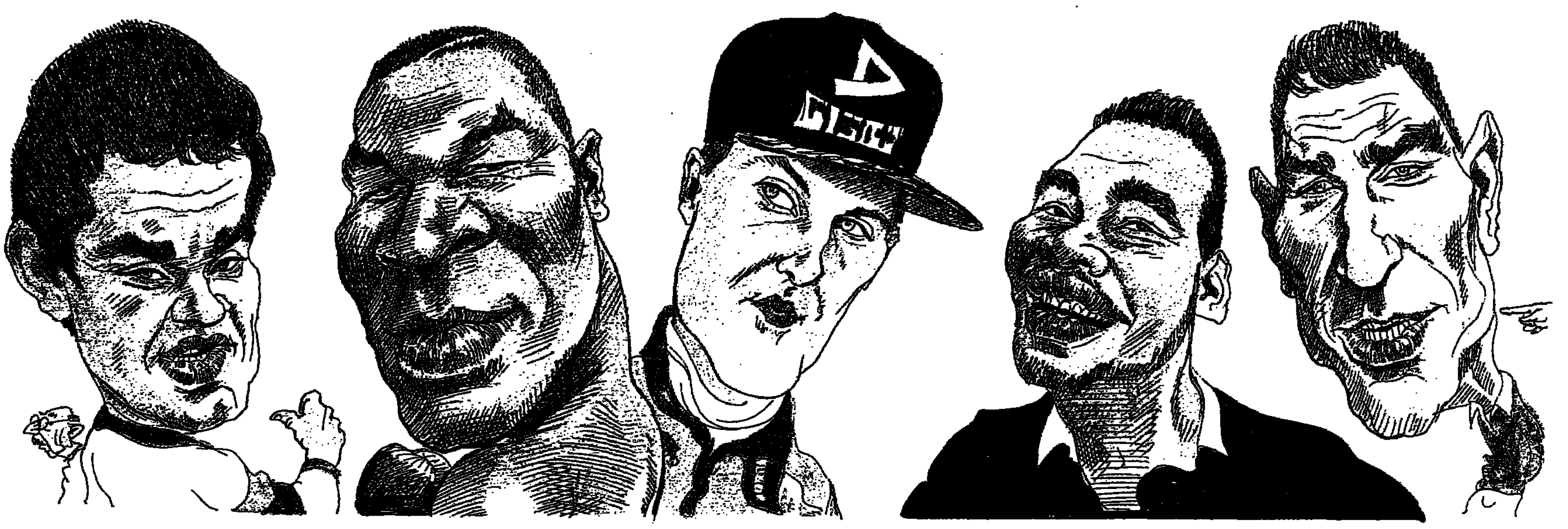


Sport's roulette wheel spins out revealing numbers game

Magic numbers hold an eternal significance for sport, figures that carry the whiff of greatness and the stench of defeat. **Simon Barnes** invited suggestions for the magic numbers of all time and of 1995: here are some that cover the enduring deeds of Michael Atherton, Jonathan Edwards and Cal Ripken, and the misdeeds of Eric Cantona, Vinnie Jones and George Graham. The highest reflect the enormous sums washing around the higher levels of some sports

2,300,000,000 The amount in US dollars paid by NBC, the American television company, for the Summer Olympics of 2004 and 2008, and the Winter Olympics of 2006.

9,000,000 The amount in US dollars that the city of Los Angeles spent on the prosecution of O. J. Simpson.

8,500,000 The amount in pounds paid by Liverpool to Nottingham Forest for Stan Collymore.

7,000,000 The value in US dollars of the contract signed by Buck Showalter to manage the Arizona Diamondbacks baseball team. They do not actually start playing until 1998.

2,400,000 The amount in pounds that the share value of Manchester United plc fell as a result of *l'affaire Cantona.*

425,000 The amount in pounds received by George Graham, the Arsenal manager, as a sweetener in his transfer dealings. "I thought Jesus, what a Christmas present!"

422335 Mike Tyson's prison number.

61,237 The record for first-class runs scored in a career, by Jack Hobbs.

17,987 The attendance at the FA Cup semi-final replay between Manchester United and Crystal Palace this year after a supporter had died during a confrontation between rival factions before the first game.

14,368 The total yardage gained by O.J. Simpson (rushing, pass reception, punt and kick-off returns) during his NFL career.

4,187 Most wickets in a first-class career; the *number for Wilfred Rhodes.*

2,632 The number of days that Charlton Athletic Football Club lived in exile from The Valley.

2,131 The Streak: the number of consecutive games played by Cal Ripken, baseball player with Baltimore Orioles, on September 6 this year, breaking the record previously held by Lou "Iron Horse" Gehrig, of the New York Yankees.

942 The number on the Princess of Wales's baseball cap. I think we can assume there is *some* sporting connection here.

643 The number of minutes that Michael Atherton batted to save the second Test match of the present series against South Africa. This, far more than the 185 runs that he scored, is a measure of his achievement.

492 The number of balls that Atherton faced during his epic innings.

483 The wicketkeeper's nightmare number: the number of runs scored by Brian Lara after he was dropped (on 18) by Chris Scott, of Durham, during Lara's record first-class innings.

474 The number of days that O. J. Simpson spent behind bars.

431 Most wickets in a Test match career; number for Sir Richard Hadlee.

282 Michael Atherton's Test match bowling average, or, if you prefer, the total number of runs that he has conceded for the single wicket that he has taken.

266 The number of days that the O. J. Simpson jury spent in sequestration.

Hadlee: most wickets

232 The number of days that baseball was on strike in the United States.

224 *The number of seconds it* took Noureddine Morceli to run a mile in 1993.

120 The number of hours of community service to which Eric Cantona was sentenced, on appeal, for kicking Matthew Simmons.

112 The *number of games* played by Pancho Gonzales and Charlie Pasarell in their match in 1969: the greatest number of games ever played in a match at Wimbledon.

100 The number of years since the Northern Union, later the Rugby League, broke away from the Rugby Football Union. It has taken the RFU this amount of time to catch up in terms of professionalism; as for playing standards, we are still waiting.

89 Smart loser's number: the number in seconds that Peter McNeeley lasted in his fight with Mike Tyson.

76 The number of touchdowns scored by O. J. Simpson.

60 This is the best number for Jonathan Edwards, I think. His great triple jump of 18.43 metres makes him the first man to clear 60 feet.

57 The number of old farts that *Will Carling suggested as* inappropriate for the running of a professional sport.

56 A magic number from baseball: the number of consecutive games in which Joe Di Maggio managed a hit in 1941. The closest anyone else has come is 44 (Willie Keaner in 1894 and Pete Rose in 1978).

55 The number of metres jumped by Eddie Edwards in the ski jumping event at the winter Olympics in Calgary in 1988.

50 The distance in yards from the Arsenal goal of Nayim *when he fired his last-minute shot* in the final of the European Cup Winners' Cup this year.

45 Briefly Michael Jordan's number. His old number, 23, was retired when he left basketball to play minor league baseball, then unretired hastily in the search for renewed inspiration.

44 The number of days that Duncan Ferguson, the Everton player, spent in jail for head-butting an opponent.

44 *Also the days served at Leeds* United by Brian Clough and Jock Stein: perhaps Dunc had the easier option.

44 The number of points scored by Gavin Hastings in Scotland's win over Ivory Coast in the rugby union World Cup this year.

44 The number of bouts Chris Eubank fought before his first defeat.

44 The greatest number of wickets taken by an Australian during a Test series: Clarrie Grimmett against South Africa in 1935-36.

44 The number of goals Jimmy Greaves scored for England.

42 The ratio of testosterone to epitestosterone in Diane Modahl's urine sample after it was kept *chambré* for two days before it went to the lab for testing.

WINNERS

THERE were, inevitably, many duplications of suggestions and in those cases the award of a bottle of Nicolas Feuillate champagne was based on criteria such as multiplicity of entry, earliness of response, aptness of citation and, where all else failed, the extraction from a hat. Many thanks to everyone who submitted numbers and cheers to the winners.

WINNERS: Ann Baker, Martin Butterworth, Mike Claughton, S M Connolly, Tom O'Connor, Mark Cook, T Coutts, P Downing, Cary Gilbart-Smith, Julian Graves, Mark Harper, Aubrey Hodes, John G Howarth, A Leyland, Tony McFarlane, Derek Morgan, K Pike, Mike Ross, Jasper Sabey, Richard Scruton, David Ward, David F White, Barry Wills, A P Wilkins.

33 *The number of national titles* won by Wayne Enstone in the sport of Rugby fives. The number was submitted by Tom O'Connor, "probably the only teetotaller in the sport", with a request that the champagne goes to Enstone himself.

32 The number of consecutive victories recorded by the great greyhound, Ballyregan Bob.

32 The number of Manchester United games that Eric Cantona missed through suspension after kicking Matthew Simmons.

27 The number in minutes representing the international football career of Matthew Le Tissier.

26 The lowest total for a completed Test-match innings: achieved by New Zealand against England in 1955.

26 The number of goals scored by Preston North End *against Hyde United in the FA Cup* in 1887; this gives us the title of a Preston fanzine: *Hyde, Hyde, What's The Score?*

23 The number of years since a nation other than Australia won the rugby league World Cup.

20 The number of sixes hit by Andrew Symonds, Gloucestershire's Anglo-Australian cricketer, against Glamorgan at Abergavenny this summer, a world record.

19 The number of wins in TT races on the Isle of Man by *Joey Dunlop; the most recent of* these came this year, when Dunlop was 42.

14½ The number of points scored by the victorious Europe Ryder Cup golf team this year.

11 The record number of catches in a Test match, achieved by Jack Russell in the second Test of the present series against South Africa. Shame about the one that he dropped, but I think it is fair to say that he made up for it.

11 *Jonah Lomu, the New Zealand* wing: for reasons of compassion, I have not included No 14, the number worn by Tony Underwood, his hapless marker in the semi-final of the rugby union World Cup. Underwood was first exposed and then publicly blamed by Jack Rowell, the England manager.

11 The number of years since a team from the American Football Conference has won the Super Bowl. Thus the climax of the American football season has become the most predictable event of the entire sporting round.

11 The number of rows of seats in the stand at Selhurst Park that Matthew Simmons descended on January 25 this year in order to say, on his own evidence, later roundly contradicted: "Off, off, off you go, Cantona! It's an early shower for you."

Gebresilasie: world record

10.19 The number of seconds *taken off the previous* world record for 5,000 metres by Haile Gebresilasie as he finished in 12min 44.39sec.

10 The number of times that Vinnie Jones (Eton and Wimbledon) has been sent off during his career.

10 The only possible number for Daley Thompson.

9 *The number of wickets taken by* Devon Malcolm in his finest hour, against South Africa at the Oval last year.

9 The record number of Formula One grand prix wins in a season, set by Nigel Mansell in 1992 and equalled by Michael Schumacher this year.

7 The number of wickets taken by Dominic Cork in the second innings of his debut Test match, against West Indies this summer.

6 The number on the shirt worn by Nelson Mandela at the rugby union World Cup final this year. The same number was worn *by François Pienaar, the South* Africa captain.

6 A magic number in football: the number of goals scored by Hungary, with Puskas and all, against England at Wembley in 1953.

5 The number of times that Eric Cantona has been sent off while playing for Manchester United.

4 For Rod Laver: the last male tennis player to achieve the grand slam by winning in Melbourne, Paris, Wimbledon and the United States, which he managed in 1969.

4 The number of runs scored by poor Mark Ramprakash in two innings in the second Test match of the present series against in *South* Africa.

3 The number of Olympic gold medals won by Steve Redgrave, the oarsman. Will he possess a magic number of 4 next year, I wonder?

3 I suppose we really had better give this number to Dominic Cork this year, for his hat-trick against West *Indies in the fourth Test of the summer.*

3 The number of countries rejected by Matthew Le Tissier in favour of England, these being Scotland, Wales and France.

3 The number of championships won, during a period of three years, by teams that included Eric Cantona.

2 A number earned by John Daly for his unique double of golf majors: one drunk, one sober. Haircut apart, the man is a hero.

1 I think we can give this number to Gordon Banks without any *explanation or argument.*

1 The number of minutes left in the match as Real Zaragoza played Arsenal in the final of the European Cup Winners' Cup when the ball came to Nayim to score probably the best goal in the history of the game.

0 Number of trophies won by Manchester United *in the 1994-*95 season.

Clubs allowed none of their traditional respite

Leaders' summit meeting is main attraction in Cup

By David Hands, Rugby Correspondent

AFTER what has been a fallow month for club rugby, the action comes fast and furious over what used to be described as the holiday period. Two days before Christmas, clubs large and small lock horns in the Pilkington Cup's fourth round; five days after the festivities, the league resumes.

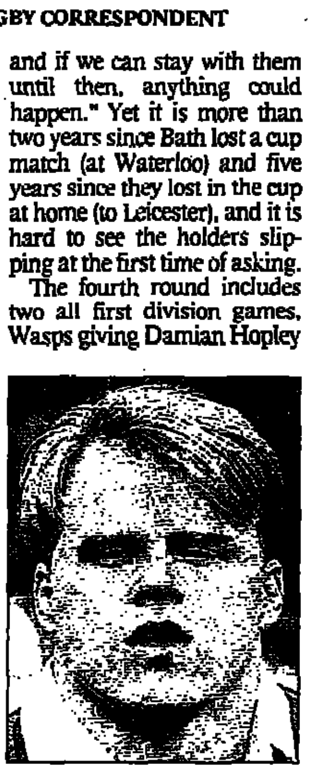
Perhaps players should become accustomed to their domestic arrangements being cut short. Professionalism makes few concessions to its practitioners and next season the hiatus of the past few weeks will be filled by European and Anglo-Welsh action. In the future, television schedules will doubtless require competitive rugby over the entire festive period.

So, God rest ye merry, gentlemen. A capacity crowd of 8,500 will descend on the Recreation Ground in Bath today to see whether Northampton can make light of the gap between the top of the second division and the top of the first. Bath, aware of the diverse calls on their players over the past month, have spent four days together in Portugal to re-establish the communal spirit that is so fundamental to them.

They field 12 internationals to Northampton's six, including Simon Geoghegan, the Ireland wing, while Northampton surrender Jonathan Bell and Allan Clarke to the Ulster side that plays Leinster in the Irish provincial championship. Yet Northampton will travel with the confidence born of success, looking to youngsters like Matt Allen, Matt Volland and Budge Pountney to upset their better-known counterparts, never mind their new international half backs.

"We compete from 1 to 15, which I don't think we did last year," Tim Rodber, the Northampton captain, said. "Bath have always come good in the last 15 minutes of their games, and if we can stay with them until then, anything could happen." Yet it is more than two years since Bath lost a cup match (at Waterloo) and five years since they lost in the cup at home (to Leicester), and it is hard to see the holders slipping at the first time of asking.

The fourth round includes two all first division games, Wasps giving Damian Hopley and Lawrence Dallaglio games in their England positions of wing and open-side flanker respectively against Sale. Harlequins take Will Carling, Jason Leonard and Jim Staples to Orrell, but are still without David Pears, Peter Mensah and Chris Sheasby.



Geoghegan: cup task

Lower down the scale, Camberley, in their first cup season, face the daunting task of stopping Wakefield, who are three divisions higher. The same gap exists for Worcester who travel to Bedford, but they do not lack ambition. Aided by a lottery grant, Worcester plan to erect an indoor training centre, new medical and weights facilities and a lecture theatre.

The sense of wellbeing achieved through consistent league results in the fifth division took them past Liverpool St Helens in the third round and, though they will be without Peter Shillingford, their captain, they hope to indicate that they can make their way into the upper echelons within a few years.

Phil Delaney, a Leicester University student, plays at centre for Leicester at Exeter in the absence of Stuart Potter, the England A player, while Bristol parade Mark Regan, the England hooker, at Reading. Fears that Regan might be suspended for receiving two yellow cards this season were put to rest by the Gloucestershire committee this week.

Blackheath overcome their hooking problems by fielding Paul Shadbolt against Coventry, the team with whom they changed divisions last season. Injuries to Colin Ridgway and Frankie Davies caused some heart-searching, but Blackheath seek to show the divisional selectors that talent in London exists outside the first division.

The Heineken League in Wales gives Neath their chance to take top spot by beating Cardiff at the Arms Park. The burden of domestic and European knockout commitments have made Cardiff shaky this month and Neath will try to take further advantage.

Unions seek to bridge gap

By David Hands

WHILE the Rugby Football Union (RFU) is busily ruling out its divisional championship next season — lack of support and lack of identity being two of the oft-quoted excuses for its failure — Australasia is proceeding in the opposite direction.

When New Zealand and Australia take part in the Super 12 tournament next year, they will do so with merged regional teams. The playing strength will not necessarily be reduced, but the historic identity of such provinces as Otago and Wellington will be diluted and there is some concern over whether the public will support them.

There are five regional teams, based on Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago, of whom Auckland are likely to be the least affected. They, of course, would have access to Jonah Lomu, since Counties, for whom Lomu plays, comes under their umbrella.

Moreover, players will be moved between regions to cover deficiencies in any position. The intention is to expose as many good players as possible to what will undoubtedly be a high level of competition, and ensure a good "product" for television, but the public response to manufactured teams may be muted.

This has always been the charge levelled at the divisional tournament in England, which the RFU committee agreed last week to disband. Instead, it is hoped that the union can select regional XVs against incoming touring teams, and give them appropriate preparation against either domestic or overseas district sides.

Such a scheme may be dependent upon the co-operation of the other home unions and their chief executives agreeing upon the desirability of a common fixture programme, including France, and the introduction of European club rugby may force co-operation that has not always been apparent in the past.

At the same time, the RFU will face pressure from leading clubs, most of them opposed to the divisional principle, who seek an elevated status. Such clubs perceive a future in Europe and against touring sides for themselves, rather than what would effectively be trial teams, created by the RFU.

Next season, the Argentinians are scheduled to tour England and Wales, while the RFU is optimistic that two further international sides will visit Twickenham before Christmas — possibly on a one-off basis, as South Africa did last month. Before then, it must reach some mutually-satisfactory agreement with clubs as to just how the yawning gap, between the best of English club rugby and the best of international rugby, is to be filled.

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

Rodber, of Northampton, knows that he must use the game against Bath to impress the England management

Rodber aims to cross class divide

David Hands on an England player who misses the challenge of life in the big league

By one of those quirks of selection, two of England's World Cup players come face to face in the tie of the fourth round of the Pilkington Cup today. Yet, whereas Tim Rodber, the Northampton captain, retains his high profile, Steve Ojomoh, of Bath, has apparently slid out of the reckoning altogether.

Ojomoh pays the high price for versatility. Twice a blind-side flanker in South Africa, once an open-side, he was named in England's first training party of the season but was overtaken by Lawrence Dallaglio as the season unfolded. No greater warning could be offered to Rodber himself for, after two in-and-out games, against South Africa and Western Samoa, his place in the side for the five nations' championship next month cannot be described as cast iron.

Yet, little more than 18 months ago, Rodber looked to have cemented his England future with a display of the highest class in Pretoria, against South Africa. Allowing for squad rotation during the World Cup last summer, he has been an ever-present since in the No 6 jersey and, with 22 caps, should be burgeoning into one of the mainstays of the side.

He has the experience, he has the physical qualities and nobody doubts the courage or presence of the Army captain. Indeed, at 26, he would be perceived as one of the candidates for the captaincy of England when Will Carling steps down, were it not that he seems to drift in and out of matches in a way that Ben Clarke, for example, does not.

Rodber acknowledges that playing second division rugby does not help his consistency. "You tend to find things easier and get away from the level you need for Test football," he said. "You can work on fitness and ball skills all you like, but it's not the same as playing week after week against clubs like Bath and Leicester.

"I didn't play well against South Africa, I should have come off when I damaged my shoulder. As each representative step comes along, I have to make sure I take advantage so as to keep the England place. My concentration has to be on my own game, and if I get that right, other things may follow."

However, getting it right is not easy when Northampton are averaging 50 points a match in the league and any little errors are masked by the quality of players around you. Nor, for a forward, is there much respite these days. Modern rugby requires constant mental and physical application, and if you are regularly involved in games that, with an hour gone, have already been won, the opportunity to coast is unavoidable.

Nevertheless, Rodber disagrees with those who have criticised his performance against Western Samoa last week. "I'm still not 100 per cent, but I'm trying to hone my game, so that I'm ready for the French next month," he said. "I made three or four mistakes I don't usually make, which may be what people have picked up on."

Rodber knows that a big game against Bath is required, under the watchful eye of Jack Rowell, the England manager, and against an all-international back row. The cup match is one of Rodber's specific stepping-stones, before reverting to second division rugby, and Ojomoh's presence alone will remind him not to slip.

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
** denotes all-ticket match*
Tables do not include last night's matches

FA Carling Premiership

Coventry v Everton
Liverpool v Arsenal
Manchester City v Chelsea
Middlesbrough v West Ham
Newcastle v Nottingham Forest
QPR v Aston Villa
Sheffield Wednesday v Southampton
Tottenham v Bolton
Wimbledon v Blackburn

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Newcastle	18	13	3	2	37	15	42
Man Utd	18	10	5	3	35	19	35
Tottenham	18	9	6	3	24	17	33
A Villa	18	9	5	4	25	14	32
Liverpool	18	9	4	5	31	15	31
Arsenal	18	8	7	3	23	12	31
Middlsboro	18	8	6	4	19	12	30
Nottm F	17	6	10	1	27	24	28
Leeds	17	7	4	6	23	24	25
Chelsea	18	6	7	5	17	19	25
Blackburn	18	7	3	8	28	24	24
Everton	18	6	5	7	22	20	23
West Ham	18	6	5	7	19	24	23
Sheff Wed	18	5	6	7	26	27	21
Southmptn	18	4	5	9	17	28	17
Man City	18	4	4	10	10	27	16
QPR	18	4	3	11	14	26	15
Wimbledon	18	3	5	10	23	38	14
Coventry	18	2	6	10	23	40	12
Bolton	18	2	3	13	16	34	9

BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE: Premier division: Burton v Chelmsford, Cambridge City v Gresley, Gloucester v Atherstone, Gravesend and Northfleet v Newport AFC; Hastings v Cheltenham; Merthyr v Halesowen, Rushden and Diamonds v Ilkeston, Salisbury v Baldock; Stafford v Sudbury Tn; VS Rugby v Crawley, Worcester v Dorchester. Midland division: Bilston v Moor Green, Bridgnorth v Hinckley Town; Buckingham Town v Bedworth, Dudley Town v RC Warwick; Grantham v Evesham, Kings Lynn v Paget R, Leicester United v Tamworth, Nuneaton v Stourbridge; Redditch v Corby; Solihull v Bury Town, Sutton Coldfield v Rothwell. Southern division: Bashley v Margate, Clevedon v Ashford; Erith and Belvedere v Yate, Fareham v Fisher 93, Forest Green v Fleet T; Sittingbourne v Newport IoW; Tonbridge Angels v Poole; Trowbridge v Havant, Waterlooville v Cinderford, Weymouth v Weston-super-Mare; Witney v Braintree

Endsleigh Insurance League
First division

Birmingham v Tranmere
* Derby v Sunderland
* Grimsby v Leicester
Luton v Huddersfield
Oldham v Watford
Portsmouth v Norwich
Reading v Wolverhampton
Stoke v Sheffield Utd
West Bromwich v Crystal Palace

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sundrland	21	10	8	3	29	16	38
Derby	22	10	7	5	35	27	37
Leicester	22	10	6	6	37	32	36
Charlton	23	9	9	5	29	23	38
Huddersfld	22	10	5	7	32	27	35
Grimsby	22	9	8	5	27	24	35
Norwich	22	9	7	6	34	26	34
Stoke	22	9	7	6	32	26	34
Birmngham	22	9	7	6	32	29	34
Southend	23	9	7	7	27	28	34
Millwall	23	9	7	7	24	28	34
Oldham	22	7	9	6	34	26	30
Tranmere	20	8	6	6	32	24	30
Ipswich	22	7	8	7	37	33	29
Barnsley	22	7	7	8	28	38	28
C Palace	21	6	8	7	24	27	26
Portsmth	22	6	7	9	34	36	25
Reading	22	5	9	8	27	30	24
West Brom	22	7	3	12	25	35	24
Watford	22	5	8	9	27	30	23
Port Vale	23	5	8	10	26	32	23
Wolvrhmptn	22	5	7	10	27	33	22
Sheff Utd	22	5	4	13	26	40	19
Luton	22	4	6	12	17	34	18

ICIS LEAGUE: Premier division: Aylesbury v Dulwich, Boreham Wood v Purfleet; Bromley v Bishop's Stortford, Carshalton v Walton and Hersham, Grays v Worthing, Harrow v Enfield, Molesey v Hayes; Yeading v St Albans, Yeovil v Chertsey. First division: Barking v Staines, Basingstoke v Thame, Berkhamsted v Billericay, Heybridge Swifts v Aldershot Town, Maidenhead United v Bognor Regis, Marlow v Abingdon Town, Oxford City v Chesham. Second division: Bedford T v Canvey Island, Bracknell v H Hempstead, Chalfont St Peter v Metropolitan Police; Cheshunt v Banstead, Collier Row v Edgware, Croydon v Tilbury, Dorking v Ware, Hampton v Witham, Saffron Walden v Hungerford, Wivenhoe v Leatherhead. Third division: Aveley v Clapton, Cove v Windsor and Eton, East Thurrock v Lewes, Epsom and Ewell v Southall, Flackwell Heath v Camberley; Harefield v Leighton; Hertford v Kingsbury; Horsham v Northwood, Tring v Harlow, Wingate and Finchley v Hornchurch

Second division

Bournemouth v Hull
Bradford v Oxford Utd
Bristol Rovers v Crewe
Burnley v Bristol City
Notts County v Blackpool
Walsall v Swindon
Wycombe v Shrewsbury

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swindon	20	12	6	2	36	15	42
Crewe	20	12	4	4	40	22	40
Notts Co	20	11	5	4	32	17	38
Blackpool	20	10	5	5	31	21	35
Burnley	21	9	7	5	35	27	34
Wrexham	20	8	8	4	32	23	32
Chestrfld	20	9	5	6	31	23	32
Shrwsbury	20	10	2	8	30	26	32
Wycombe	20	7	9	4	28	22	30
Stockport	21	7	8	6	25	21	29
Bradford	20	8	4	8	28	33	28
Oxford Utd	20	7	7	6	27	22	28
Bournemth	20	8	4	8	22	26	28
Bristol R	20	7	5	8	21	29	26
Peterboro	21	6	7	8	27	31	25
Walsall	20	6	7	7	23	18	25
Carlisle	21	5	7	9	27	33	22
Bristol City	20	5	7	8	20	29	22
York	20	6	3	11	23	32	21
Rotherham	21	5	6	10	23	35	21
Swansea	21	4	8	9	22	35	20
Brentford	20	5	5	10	16	26	20
Brighton	20	4	3	13	17	34	15
Hull	20	2	8	10	16	32	14

LEAGUE OF WALES: Bangor City v Rhyl, Briton Ferry v Barry (2.30), Caersws v Ton Pentre; Connah's Quay v Afan Lido, Flint Town v Aberystwyth, Inter Cardiff v Conwy, Llansantffraid v Holywell, Porthmadog v Llanelli

ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE: Premier division: Basildon U v Maldon, Burnham Ramblers v Stansted, Concord v Great Wakering, East Ham v Bowers, Ford United v Sawbridgeworth, Hullbridge Sports v Romford, Southend Manor v Eton Manor

LONDON SPARTAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Beaconsfield SYCOB v Corinthian-Casuals, Croydon v Hanwell, Woolwich v St Margaretsbury

COMBINED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Ashford v Godalming and Guildford; DCA Basingstoke v Peppard, Farnham v Viking Sports, Feltham v Cobham, Hartley Wintney v Cranleigh, Merstham v Bedfont, Raynes Park Vale v Chipstead, Reading v Eton Wick, Sandhurst v Netheam, Walton Casuals v Ash, Westfield v Horley

Third division

Bury v Colchester
Chester v Barnet
Mansfield v Hartlepool
Plymouth v Cambridge Utd
* Preston v Gillingham
Scarborough v Northampton
Torquay v Darlington
Wigan v Lincoln

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chester	19	11	5	3	38	21	38
Preston	20	9	10	1	43	20	37
Gillingham	19	10	6	3	25	7	36
Plymouth	20	9	6	5	34	22	33
Rochdale	20	9	5	6	33	22	32
Doncaster	21	9	5	7	25	27	32
Colchester	20	8	7	5	31	25	31
Bury	20	8	7	5	24	25	31
Darlington	20	7	9	4	22	19	30
Cambs Utd	20	8	5	7	33	33	29
Wigan	20	7	7	6	26	25	28
Exeter	21	6	9	6	23	25	27
Hereford	21	5	9	7	26	26	24
Cardiff	21	6	6	9	23	24	24
Northmptn	20	6	6	8	22	21	24
Fulham	21	4	11	6	28	28	23
Scunthrpe	21	5	8	8	28	28	23
L Orient	20	6	5	9	22	32	23
Mansfield	20	4	10	6	30	38	22
Barnet	20	4	10	6	20	25	22
Scarboro	20	4	8	8	22	30	20
Hartlpool	20	4	7	9	17	32	19
Lincoln	20	4	6	10	18	35	18
Torquay	20	2	7	11	18	41	13

Bell's Scottish League
First division

Clydebank v Airdrie

Second division

Stirling v Montrose

Third division

Albion v Caledonian Thistle

MINERVA SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division: Langford v Hatfield, Toddington v Milton Keynes, Shillington v Brache Sparta, Biggleswade v Buckingham Athletic, Arlesey Town v Potters Bar, Welwyn Garden v Letchworth, Harpenden v London Colney

HEREWARD SPORTS UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Boston v Newport Pagnell, Bourne v S and L Corby, Desborough v Holbeach, Long Buckby v Cogenhoe, Mirrlees Blackstone v Eynesbury; Northampton Spencer v Raunds; Potton v Stamford, St Neots v Kempston, Wellingborough v Stotfold, Wootton v Spalding

JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Cornard v Harwich and Parkeston, Fakenham v March, Great Yarmouth v Wisbech, Lowestoft v Woodbridge, Soham v Sudbury, Stowmarket v Halstead, Sudbury Res v Clacton, Tiptree v Newmarket

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: Aerostructures v Bournemouth, Totton v Cowes Sports, Andover v Eastleigh, Brockenhurst v East Cowes, Downton v Petersfield, Gosport v Bemerton Heath, Ryde Sports v Whitchurch, Swanage and Herston v Christchurch, Thatcham v BAT, Wimborne v Portsmouth.

GREAT MILLS LEAGUE: Premier division: Bideford v Backwell, Calne v Bristol Manor Farm, Frome v Elmore, Mangotsfield v Chippenham, Tiverton v Crediton, Torrington v Taunton

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: First division: Cray v Faversham, Deal v Greenwich, Furness v Folkestone Invicta, Herne Bay v Thamesmead, Sheppey v Corinthian, Slade Green v Whitstable

HELLENIC LEAGUE: Premier division: Abingdon United v Endsleigh, Brackley v Burnham, Cirencester v Tuffley, Didcot v Bicester, Fairford v Kintbury, Highworth v Almondsbury, Lambourn Sports v Carterton, North Leigh v Banbury, Shortwood v Swindon Supermarine

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Halesowen H v Pershore T, Hinckley Athletic v Sandwell, Kynpersley V v Chasetown, Oldbury U v Boldmere St M, Rushall O v Bolehall S, Shifnal T v Shepshed D, Stapenhill v Blakenhall, Willenhall v Barwell

ENDSLEIGH MIDLAND COMBINATION: Premier division: Bloxwich v Upton, Cholmsley v Alvechurch Villa, Coventry Sphinx v Handrahan Timbers, Highgate v Knowle, Kings Heath v Massey Ferguson, Meir KA v Olton Royale, Shirley v Southam, Studley BKL v Northfield, Wellesbourne v Coleshill, West Midland Fire Service v Ancells

BORD GAIS LEAGUE OF IRELAND: Premier division: Sligo v UCD (7.30)

ARTHURIAN LEAGUE: First division: Brentwoods v Wellingburians

OLD BOYS LEAGUE: Premier division: O Hamptonians v Glyn, O Ignatians v Latymer, O Isleworthians v Clapham, O Meadonians v O Aloysians, O Tenisonians v Cardinal Manning. Senior division one: O Kingsburians v Chertsey, O Vaughanians v O Suttonians, O Wilsonians v O Tiffinians, Phoenix v O Salvatorians, Shene v O Manorians.

BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE: Premier division: Cradley Town v Bloxwich S, Ettingshall H T v Lichfield C, Ludlow T v Darlaston, Lye Town v Westfields, Malvern T v Gornal A, Stourport S v Stafford T, Tividale v Brierley Hill T; Walsall Wood v Wolverhampton C, Wednesfield v Pelsall V.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Arundel v Portfield, Eastbourne Town v Stamco, Hassocks v Three Bridges; Mile Oak v Wick, Oakwood v Horsham YMCA, Pagham v Shoreham, Peacehaven and Telscombe v Langney Sports, Ringmer v Hailsham, Southwick v Burgess Hill, Whitehawk v Crowborough

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Armthorpe Welfare v Maltby MW, Arnold v Sheffield; Ashfield v Denaby; Belper Town v Ossett Town; Brigg v Thackley, Goole v Glasshoughton Welfare, Hallam v Hucknall; Ossett Albion v North Ferriby, Pickering v Hatfield Main; Stocksbridge PS v Liversedge

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Burscough v Bootle; Chadderton v Maine Road, Clitheroe v Prescot, Darwen v Skelmersdale, Flixton v Blackpool Rovers, Glossop North End v Trafford, Holker Old Boys v Mossley, Kidsgrove v Newcastle Town, Penrith v St Helens, Rossendale v Salford

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE: First division: Bedlington Terriers v Seaham Red Star; Chester-le-Street v Peterlee, Consett v Billingham, Crook v Durham, Dunston Federation v Tow Law, Ferryhill v RTM Newcastle, Guisborough v Eppleton CW, Shildon v Whickham, Stockton v Murton

SOUTHERN AMATEUR LEAGUE: First division: Carshalton v West Wickham, Nat West Bank v South Bank, Winchmore Hill v Crouch End Vampires. Second division: Barclays Bank v O Latymerians; Midland Bank v Lloyds Bank, O Bromleians v O Stationers; O Lyonian v Lensbury; O Parkonians v Alexandra Park. Third division: Brentham v Bank of England, Merton v Southgate Olympic, O Salesians v O Westminster Citizens

SCHOOLS MATCHES: George Anderson Trophy: Derby v Sunderland (12.0). Other match: Watford v Leeds (11.0).

RUGBY LEAGUE

Silk Cut Challenge Cup
Second round replay

Egremont v Woolston (2.30)

YORKSHIRE ELECTRICITY CUP FINAL: Thornhill v Skirlaugh (Dewsbury, 1.0)

RUGBY UNION

Kick-off 2.30 unless stated

Pilkington Cup
Fourth round

Bath v Northampton (2.15)
Bedford v Worcester (3.0)
Blackheath v Coventry (3.0)
Camberley v Wakefield (2.0)
Exeter v Leicester (3.0)
Gloucester v Walsall (3.0)
Leeds v Waterloo (2.15)
London Irish v London Welsh (3.0)
Newcastle v Moseley (3.0)
Nottingham v London Scottish (3.0)
Orrell v Harlequins (1.30)
Reading v Bristol (2.0)
Sale v Wasps (3.0)
Saracens v Rugby (1.45)
Weston-super-Mare
v West Hartlepool (2.15)
Winnington Park v Lydney (2.15)

Swalec Cup
Fourth round

Talywain v Dunvant

Heineken League
First division

Aberavon v Pontypridd
Abertillery v Newport
Cardiff v Neath
Ebbw Vale v Swansea
Newbridge v Bridgend
Treorchy v Llanelli

Second division

Caerphilly v Pontypool
Llanharan v Cross Keys
Maesteg v Bonymaen
Tenby Utd v Llandovery
Ystradgynlais v Abercynon

Irish inter-provincial championship

Connacht v Munster
(at Galway)
Leinster v Ulster
(at Dublin)

Club matches

Berry Hill v Hereford
Birmingham S v Bromsgrove (2.15)
Fylde v Vale of Lune (2.15)
Havant v Bournemouth
Henley v Maidenhead
Kendal v Middlesbrough (2.15)
Morley v Bradford and Bingley (3.0)
North Walsham v Norwich (2.15)
Nuneaton v Cheltenham
Redruth v Penzance
Richmond v High Wycombe (3.0)
Sandal v Old Crossleyans (2.15)
Sheffield v Harrogate
St Ives v Exeter
Stoke v Stafford
Stourbridge v Whitchurch
Wharfedale v Northern C

PILKINGTON SHIELD: Fifth round: London and South East division: Billericay v Hadleigh; Enfield Ignatians v Deal Wanderers; Folkestone v Dover, London Exiles v Old Ashmoleans; London French v Battersea Ironsides. Midland division: Bedford Swifts v Wellingborough Old Grammarians; Berkswell and Balsall Common v Ledbury; Upton-upon-Severn v Erdington. Northern division: Huddersfield YMCA v Newton-le-Willows; Hullensians v Medicals; Marple v Old Anselmians, Shell Stanlow v North Shields. South and South West division: Helston v Bodmin, Old Bristolians v Topsham; Trowbridge v Yardley and District, Westbury v Old Centralians.

BASKETBALL

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Derby v Newcastle (8.0). Manchester v Leopards (7.30). Birmingham v Worthing (7.30). Hemel Hempstead v Doncaster (7.30); Thames Valley v Chester (8.0)

LACROSSE

SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SOCIETY LEAGUE: Premier division: Cheadle v Stockport; Boardman and Eccles v Poynton, Mellor v Heaton Mersey; Cheadle Hulme v Old Waconians; Timperley v Hulmeians

TOMORROW

FOOTBALL

FA Carling Premiership

Leeds v Manchester Utd (12.0)

RUGBY UNION

Tennents inter-district championship

South of Scotland v Glasgow District
(at Philiphaugh, Selkirk, 2.0)

RUGBY LEAGUE

Stones Championship
First division

Huddersfield v Hull (2.0)

BOXING DAY FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
** denotes all-ticket match*
Pools coupon numbers in brackets

FA Carling Premiership

(1) Arsenal v QPR (12.0)
(2) Aston Villa v Liverpool
(-) Blackburn v Manchester City (8.0)
(3) Chelsea v Wimbledon (12.0)
(4) Everton v Middlesbrough
(5) Nottingham Forest v Sheffield Wed
(6) * Southampton v Tottenham (12.0)
(7) West Ham v Coventry (12.0)

Endsleigh Insurance League
First division

(8) Barnsley v Stoke (12.0)
(9) Charlton v Portsmouth (12.0)
(10) Crystal Palace v Luton (12.0)
(11) * Huddersfield v Derby
(—) * Leicester v Ipswich (11.30)
(12) Norwich v Southend
(13) Port Vale v West Bromwich (12.0)
(14) Sheffield Utd v Birmingham (12.0)
(15) Sunderland v Grimsby
(16) Tranmere v Oldham
(—) Watford v Reading (11.30)
(17) Wolverhampton v Millwall

Second division

(18) * Blackpool v Burnley
(19) Brentford v Brighton (12.0)
(20) Bristol City v Swansea
(21) Chesterfield v Peterborough
(22) Crewe v Wrexham
(23) Hull v Notts County
(24) Oxford Utd v Bournemouth
(25) Rotherham v Walsall
(26) Shrewsbury v Bristol Rovers (12.0)
(27) Stockport v Carlisle (12.0)
(28) Swindon v Wycombe
(29) York v Bradford

Third division

(30) Barnet v Mansfield (1.0)
(31) Cambridge Utd v Wigan
(32) Cardiff v Chester
(33) Colchester v Leyton Orient (12.0)
(34) Darlington v Doncaster
(—) Exeter v Torquay (11.0)
(35) Gillingham v Plymouth
(36) Hartlepool v Scarborough
(37) Lincoln v Fulham
(38) Northampton v Hereford
(39) * Rochdale v Preston
(40) Scunthorpe v Bury

Vauxhall Conference

(—) Bath v Farnborough
(—) Bromsgrove v
Kidderminster (11.30)
(—) Dover v Welling (11.30)
(—) Gateshead v Morecambe
(—) Halifax v Southport
(—) Hednesford v Kettering
(—) Macclesfield v Telford
(—) Northwich v Altrincham
(—) Slough v Stevenage
(—) Stalybridge v Runcorn
(—) Woking v Dagenham and Red

Bell's Scottish League
Premier division

(41) Falkirk v Aberdeen
(42) Hearts v Motherwell
(43) Partick v Hibernian
(44) Raith v Celtic
(45) Rangers v Kilmarnock

First division

(46) Airdrie v St Mirren
(47) Clydebank v Dundee
(48) Dumbarton v Dunfermline
(49) Dundee Utd v Hamilton
(50) St Johnstone v Greenock Morton

Second division

(51) Ayr v Clyde
(52) Forfar v East Fife
(53) Queen of South v Stenhousemuir
(54) Stranraer v Berwick

Third division

(55) Brechin v Alloa (2.0)
(56) Cowdenbeath v East Stirling
(57) Livingston v Queen's Park
(58) Ross County v Arbroath

BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE: Premier division: Atherstone v VS Rugby (11.0), Baldock v Rushden and Diamonds; Chelmsford v Gravesend and Northfleet (11.30), Cheltenham v Gloucester, Crawley v Hastings, Dorchester v Salisbury; Gresley v Burton (11.30), Halesowen v Worcester, Ilkeston v Stafford (12.0), Newport AFC v Merthyr (11.0), Sudbury Tn v Cambridge City. Midland division: Bedworth v Dudley Town (12.0); Bury Town v King's Lynn; Corby v Grantham (12.0); Evesham v Redditch (11.30), Hinckley Town v Leicester United (11.0), Moor Green v Solihull (12.0), Paget R v Sutton Coldfield (11.0); RC Warwick v Bilston (12.0), Rothwell v Buckingham Town (11.30), Stourbridge v Bridgnorth (11.30); Tamworth v Nuneaton (11.0). Southern division: Ashford v Tonbridge Angels (11.30), Braintree v Erith and Belvedere (11.15); Cinderford v Forest Green (11.30), Fisher 93 v Witney, Fleet T v Fareham; Havant v Waterlooville (11.30), Margate v Sittingbourne, Newport IoW v Bashley (12.0), Poole v Weymouth, Weston-super-Mare v Clevedon (11.0), Yate v Trowbridge (11.30)

BORD GAIS LEAGUE OF IRELAND. Premier division: Derry v Bohemians (2.45); Shamrock v Dundalk (2.15)

LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth v Caersws, Bangor City v Holywell, Barry v Ebbw Vale, Briton Ferry v Inter Cardiff, Flint Town v Conwy, Newtown v Connah's Quay; Rhyl v Llansantffraid, Ton Pentre v Cwmbran.

ICIS LEAGUE: Premier division: Bishop's Stortford v Hitchin, Chertsey v Kingstonian; Dulwich v Bromley, Enfield v Aylesbury (11.30); Hayes v Harrow (11.15), Hendon v Yeading (11.30), Purfleet v Grays (11.0), St Albans v Boreham Wood (11.0); Sutton United v Carshalton (11.30); Walton and Hersham v Molesey (11.0), Worthing v Yeovil. First division: Abingdon Town v Maidenhead United (11.30), Aldershot Town v Basingstoke, Barton Rovers v Marlow (11.30), Billericay v Barking (11.30); Chesham v Berkhamsted (11.0); Leyton Pennant v Heybridge Swifts (11.0); Ruislip Manor v Wembley (1.30). Staines v Wokingham, Thame v Oxford City, Whyteleafe v Uxbridge (11.30). Second division: Banstead v Croydon (11.0); Canvey Island v Collier Row (12.0), Edgware v Chalfont St Peter; Egham v Bracknell (11.0), H Hempstead v Bedford T, Leatherhead v Dorking (11.30), Tilbury v Saffron Walden, Witham v Wivenhoe (11.0). Third division: Leighton v Tring (11.0); Lewes v Horsham (11.0), Northwood v Harefield (11.30), Southall v Wingate and Finchley, Windsor and Eton v Flackwell Heath (11.0)

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: Aerostructures v Eastleigh (11.0), Totton v BAT (11.0), Andover v Thatcham, Bournemouth v Christchurch (11.30), Brockenhurst v Lymington (11.0), Downton v Bemerton Heath (11.0), East Cowes Vics v Cowes Sports, Gosport v Whitchurch (11.0), Swanage and Herston v Wimborne (11.0)

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Bamber Bridge v Accrington Stanley; Barrow v Blyth Spartans; Bishop Auckland v Spennymoor, Buxton v Matlock; Droylsden v Knowsley, Emley v Frickley, Gainsborough v Boston; Guiseley v Chorley; Leek v Hyde, Marine v Colwyn Bay, Winsford v Witton. First division: Curzon Ashton v Ashton United, Eastwood Town v Bradford PA; Farsley Celtic v Harrogate Town; Gretna v Great Harwood, Lancaster v Netherfield, Radcliffe v Leigh; Warrington v Congleton, Workington v Fleetwood, Worksop v Alfreton

ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE: Premier division: Bowers v Basildon U (11.0), Brentwood v Romford (11.0), Concord v Hullbridge Sports (11.0); Great Wakering v Southend Manor (11.0), Maldon v Burnham Ramblers (11.0), Stansted v Sawbridgeworth (11.30)

GREAT MILLS LEAGUE: Premier division: Bideford v Barnstaple, Brislington v Backwell, Bristol Manor Farm v Mangotsfield (11.0), Chippenham v Calne; Elmore v Tiverton, Frome v Paulton, Odd Down v Westbury

JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Clacton v Harwich and Parkeston (11.0), Diss v Watton (11.0), Great Yarmouth v Lowestoft (11.0), Haverhill v Halstead (11.0), March v Wisbech (11.0), Newmarket v Soham (11.0), Stowmarket v Hadleigh U (11.0); Sudbury Wanderers v Sudbury Town Res (11.0), Tiptree v Cornard (11.0); Woodbridge v Felixstowe (11.0), Wroxham v Fakenham (11.0)

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: First division: Beckenham v Crockenhill (11.0), Dartford v Furness (11.0), Deal v Canterbury (11.30), Folkestone Invicta v Ramsgate (11.30), Sheppey v Chatham (12.0)

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Burgess Hill v Hassocks (11.0), Crowborough v Ringmer (11.0), Hailsham v Eastbourne Town (11.0); Horsham YMCA v Mile Oak (11.0); Langney Sports v Stamco (11.0); Peacehaven and Telscombe v Whitehawk (11.0). Portfield v Pagham (11.0), Shoreham v Southwick (11.0), Three Bridges v Oakwood (11.0), Wick v Arundel (11.0)

HEREWARD SPORTS UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Cogenhoe v Northampton S (11.0), Eynesbury v St Neots (11.0), Holbeach v Boston (11.30), Kempston v Wootton (11.0), Newport Pagnell v Long Buckby (11.0), Raunds v Wellingborough (11.0), Spalding v Bourne (11.0), Stamford v Mirrlees B; S and L Corby v Desborough (11.0); Stotfold v Potton (11.0)

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Barwell v Hinckley Athletic (11.0), Blakenhall v Rushall O (11.0); Boldmere St M v Chasetown (11.0), Bolehall S v Shifnal T (11.0); Halesowen H v Oldbury U (11.0); Rocester v Kynpersley V (11.0); Sandwell v West Mid Police (11.0), Shepshed D v Stapenhill (11.0). Stratford T v Pershore T (11.0)

ENDSLEIGH MIDLAND COMBINATION: Premier division: Alvechurch Villa v Studley BKL (11.30), Ancells v Bloxwich (11.30); Coleshill v Cholmsley (11.30), Handrahan Timbers v West Midland Fire Service (11.30), King's Heath v Knowle (11.30) Massey Ferguson v Coventry Sphinx (11.30) Northfield v Highgate (11.30), Olton Royale v Shirley (11.30); Southam v Wellesbourne (11.30)

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Ards v Bangor, Cliftonville v Crusaders; Glentoran v Linfield; Portadown v Glenavon

BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE: Premier division: Brierley Hill T v Lye Town (11.0), Cradley Town v Hill Top R (11.0), Darlaston v Wednesfield (11.0), Ludlow T v Stourport S (11.0); Malvern T v Westfields (11.0); Gornal A v Tividale (11.0), Pelsall V v Bloxwich S (11.0), Stafford T v Wolverhampton C (11.0). Walsall Wood v Lichfield C (11.0).

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Ashfield v Hucknall (12.30), Denaby v Maltby MW (11.0), Hallam v Stocksbridge PS (11.0). Ossett Albion v Hatfield Main

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Bootle v Maine Road (2.30), Clitheroe v Blackpool Rovers, Eastwood H v Kidsgrove (11.0); Glossop North End v Flixton; Holker Old Boys v Penrith, Nantwich v Newcastle Town (12.0); Rossendale v Darwen (1.0); St Helens v Prescot (1.0); Salford v Chadderton, Skelmersdale v Burscough, Trafford v Mossley.

RUGBY UNION

Kick-off 2.30 unless stated

Club matches

Aberavon v Cardiff Inst
Aspatria v Wigton (2.0)
Bedford v Bedfordshire (3.0)
Birmingham Solihull v Silhillians (11.0)
Camborne v Redruth
Cardiff v Pontypridd
Cheltenham v Stroud
Exeter v President's XV (3.0)
Gloucester v Lydney (3.0)
High Wycombe v Chairmen's XV
Llanelli v London Welsh
London Irish v Old Millhillians (3.0)
Maesteg v Bridgend
Moseley v Coventry (3.0)
Neath v Bonymaen
Newport v Bristol
Northampton v Stirling County (3.0)
Northern v Newcastle
Otley v Leeds (2.15)
Penarth v Old Penarthians (11.0)
Pontypool Utd v Pontypool
Preston Grasshoppers v Fylde (2.15)
Sale v Broughton Park (3.0)
Treorchy v Penygraig
West Hartlepool v
Hartlepool Rovers (3.0)
Wharfedale v North Ribblesdale

RUGBY LEAGUE

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Stones Championship

Bradford v Halifax
Leeds v Castleford (11.30)
Oldham v Warrington
Wigan v St Helens

First division

Batley v Dewsbury (12.30)
Featherstone v Wakefield (11.30)
Keighley v Rochdale (3.15)
Widnes v Salford

Second division

Carlisle v Barrow (2.0)
Chorley v Highfield
Hull KR v York (2.30)
Hunslet v Bramley (3.30)
Swinton v Leigh

OTHER SPORT

RACING: Kempton Park (12.45), Ayr (12.25), Hereford (1.05), Huntingdon (12.30): 1.15 1.45 2.20 2.50 3.20 Market Rasen (12.25); Newton Abbot (12.50); Sedgefield (12.40); Wetherby (12.50), Wincanton (12.40); Wolverhampton (1.0)

هكذا من الأصل

Atherton ponders Test options after rain again disrupts preparations

England left to focus on problem position

From Alan Lee, cricket correspondent in Pietermaritzburg

A WEEK as inconclusive as any on this stubbornly torpid tour ended as it had begun yesterday, with the England players staring hopelessly out at lashing rain and worrying about who will be delegated to fill the unenviable No 3 position in the next Test match.

While the farmers of KwaZulu-Natal continue to celebrate the dramatic end of their drought, England cannot wait to evacuate this saturated part of the country. After the abandonment yesterday of a fixture against the South African Students XI that was, anyway, going nowhere, they have lost the equivalent of almost five playing days in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The forecast is not encouraging for the journey west to Port Elizabeth today. It was raining there, too.

Nobody here can remember a South African cricket season so badly affected by rain, but the making of such unattractive history is no more a consolation to England than the statistic that Port Elizabeth has never lost a day's Test cricket to the weather. It is increasingly hard to be confident that this record will survive the next week.

The fourth Test is scheduled to start at the St George's ground on Boxing Day, and England will practise on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, when the traditional fancy dress party has been dropped. The players' wives and girlfriends arrived *en masse* this week and that, combined with the disorientating weather, could be thought a threat to the team's focus. Michael Atherton, the captain, is alert to the possibility.

"We have made a point of reminding the players what we are all here for," he said yesterday; though after a futile hour-long bus ride from Durban to confirm the formalities of one more wasted day, even Atherton must have begun to wonder exactly what that is.

Atherton admitted that he has been disappointed by the standard of pitches presented to the touring side and, latterly, by the standard of opposition. "Outside the Tests, the pitches we have played on have produced uninteresting cricket to watch and to play in," he said. "Between the Tests, it would also have been nice to have some quality opposition to give the guys an edge. These are things I will be mentioning in my end-of-tour report."

He can, however, blame nobody for the weather. "We must keep to our routines and prepare as we always do," he said. "If we end up going to Cape Town for the last Test still at 0-0, it could be one hell of an occasion." Indeed it could. Boosted by an influx of 5,000 England supporters, ticket sales at Newlands suggest an unprecedented capacity crowd for every day of the game.

St George's will not be quite so packed, but an aggregate attendance of 70,000 is predicted, and the anticipated debut of Paul Adams, the South Africa teenage spin contortionist, will be the principal attraction for most of them. Whatever mysteries Adams has to offer, however, will be matched by heightened conjecture surrounding England's batting order.

REBECCA NADEN

Atherton, the England captain, surveys the bleak conditions that forced another abandonment yesterday

The No 3 position has now assumed such a contaminated air that it is fair to say that nobody in the party wants to bat there. Even Jason Gallian, the latest arrival and, marginally, the most likely incumbent, would prefer to open. He has, however, arrived well prepared, having studied television footage of Adams while in Pakistan with the England A team.

Alternatives to Gallian are headed by Robin Smith, although the irrepressible Mark Ilott, a confirmed tailender, made an interesting suggestion. "We should put someone useless at No 3, so it wouldn't matter if he failed," Ilott said. "Someone like me." Atherton was also overheard booking a telephone call to a Mr Gooch in Essex, though it was not believed to be an SOS.

The biggest decision to be made by Atherton and Raymond Illingworth, the tour manager, concerns the balance of the side, and, for these last two Tests, both are instinctively in favour of including five bowlers and batting Jack Russell at No 6. "If it looks like a pitch for two spinners, then that is what we will do," Atherton said. Russell awaits with interest. "I would relish the challenge," he said.

The lack of cricket yesterday deprived Peter Martin of an opportunity to test the strain under his right arm, but Atherton remains apparently unconcerned. "He can have two days of nets before the game, but our advice is that he will be all right and that there is no risk involved in playing him," he said.

Rivals square up to battle for the play-offs

By Stuart Jones

THE closing weekend of the National Football League *promises to be filled with* unprecedented tension. Never before have as many as 18 teams still been in contention for a place in the Super Bowl and the tangled complexities will not be fully unravelled until the last game is completed, for only the sixth time, on Christmas Day.

Eight teams have already *qualified for the play-offs, four* of them as the champions of their respective divisions. Nevertheless, they all continue to pursue a common goal — the right to act throughout as the hosts, the privilege granted to the pair holding the best records.

San Francisco 49ers again stand out in the stronger of the two sections, the National conference. The winners of the western division for the eleventh time in 13 years, they have already earned a bye in the first round, which is to be played next weekend. They need to secure their twelfth victory of the season, in Atlanta, to be assured of staying thereafter in San Francisco. Their principal weapon is Jerry Rice. A wide receiver, he has so far gained 1,695 yards and requires only another 51 to break the record for a season, which has stood since 1961.

Atlanta Falcons oppose them with quantity rather than singular quality. If Terance Mathis and Bert Emanuel, the wide receivers, each accumulate another 47 yards, they will, with Craig Heyward, a running back, become the first trio of colleagues to be credited with more than 1,000 yards for six years.

The 49ers, if they lose, can be overhauled by Dallas Cowboys and Philadelphia Eagles. Their rivalry in the eastern division will not be decided until Monday, when the Cowboys visit Arizona Cardinals.

The most prominent figure there is likely to be Emmitt Smith, With one more touchdown, he will surpass the record for a season — of 23, set by John Riggins more than a decade ago. If he rushes for 100 yards, for the twelfth time this season, he will equal the feats of Eric Dickerson and Barry Foster.

The Eagles have won nine of their past 11 games, but they are involved in the most competitive fixture of the weekend. To apply pressure on the Cowboys, they have to maintain their unbeaten run at the home of Chicago Bears, who have won six of their past seven games.

The Bears are one of the teams still in contention, but are relying on others for their season to be extended. With Art Monk looking to stretch his own sequence of catching at least one pass beyond 182 successive games, they will go through only if they win and the Falcons lose.

Pittsburgh Steelers, with eight consecutive victories, have struck the richest vein of form, but they are not yet assured of being the American conference representatives with home advantage throughout the play-offs. They must win away against Green Bay Packers. Kansas City Chiefs, however, will stay ahead of them if they, in turn, beat Seattle Seahawks. Already certain to be in the play-offs for the sixth successive year — the league's longest unbroken run — they have so far suffered only three defeats, the league's best record.

Ten teams are scrambling for the four remaining "wild cards". They include Indianapolis Colts, who can eliminate Miami Dophins by beating New England. Likewise, if San Diego Chargers win away against New York Giants, they will knock out their conference rivals, Oakland Raiders, Denver Broncos and the Seahawks.

Detroit Lions, Minnesota Vikings and St Louis Rams, as well as the Bears and the Falcons, are the others whose fate still hangs in the balance. It remains so fine overall that only four of the 15 fixtures spread across the next three days have no bearing on the final outcome.

TABLES

* Division title † Play-off place

American Football Conference

East division	W	L	PF	PA
* Buffalo	10	5	333	307
Indianapolis	8	7	321	309
Miami	8	7	357	310
New England	6	9	287	367
NY Jets	3	12	233	372
Central division				
* Pittsburgh	11	4	388	303
Cincinnati	6	9	322	350
Houston	6	9	320	307
Cleveland	5	10	268	332
Jacksonville	3	12	251	383
West division				
* Kansas City	12	3	332	238
Oakland	8	7	320	301
San Diego	8	7	294	306
Seattle	8	7	350	340
Denver	7	8	357	317

National Football Conference

East division	W	L	PF	PA
† Dallas	11	4	398	278
† Philadelphia	10	5	304	318
NY Giants	5	10	273	313
Washington	5	10	306	342
Arizona	4	11	262	385
Central division				
† Green Bay	10	5	380	295
Detroit	9	6	399	326
Minnesota	8	7	388	358
Chicago	8	7	372	346
Tampa Bay	7	8	228	298
West division				
* San Francisco	11	4	430	230
Atlanta	8	7	334	322
St Louis	7	8	287	377
Carolina	7	8	272	305
New Orleans	6	9	307	348

FIXTURES TO COME: Today: Indianapolis v New England, NY Giants v San Diego, Tampa Bay v Detroit. Tomorrow: Atlanta v San Francisco, Buffalo v Houston, Cincinnati v Minnesota, Chicago v Philadelphia, Green Bay v Pittsburgh, Jacksonville v Cleveland, Kansas City v Seattle, NY Jets v New Orleans, Oakland v Denver, St Louis v Miami, Washington v Carolina. Monday: Arizona v Dallas.

Australia retain their faith in struggling Boon

Boon: keeps place

DAVID BOON has kept his place in the Australia party for the second Test match against Sri Lanka that starts at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Boxing Day. Boon had been dropped for the first round of World Series Cup one-day internationals and was considered in danger of being dropped from the Test team after scoring only two half-centuries in his past 18 innings.

Boon started the international season with 54 against Pakistan in the first Test, in Brisbane, but has since made scores of 34, 0, 16, 6 and 13, prompting calls for him to be replaced. Boon made just 45 and 6 in his most recent innings for Tasmania, against Victoria in a Sheffield Shield match.

Paul Reiffel, the fast bowler, and Steve Waugh, the experienced batsman, also return after missing the first Test, in Perth, because of injury. Waugh was suffering from a torn groin muscle and Reiffel has overcome a hamstring complaint.

Stuart Law, the Queensland all-rounder, is discarded to make way for Waugh's return despite making 54 not out at Perth on his Test debut. Law also made 74 for Australia against the West Indies in a World Series match in Melbourne on Tuesday.

Brendon Julian performed disappointingly in Perth, his home ground, and Michael Kasprowicz, who was twelfth man for the Test at the Waca, is preferred to him in the squad of 12 and stands by to make his first Test appearance.

Greg Blewett, who was left out of the match at Perth, gave the selectors a reminder of his ability with a century for the Australia XI against the West Indians at Brisbane yesterday. Blewett punished a weakened attack in scoring 115 before the youthful Australia XI declared their first innings on 323 for seven.

Stuart Williams and Phil Simmons, the West Indian openers, survived the final hour to guide their side to 37 without loss at close of play on the first day of the three-day match.

The West Indians rested Curtly Ambrose, Ian Bishop and Courtney Walsh, their leading fast bowlers. Ottis Gibson, who took three wickets for 68 runs from his 23 overs, shared the new ball with Anderson Cummins.

Blewett, who lost his place after the recent home series against Pakistan, added 148 runs for the third wicket in partnership with Matthew Elliott, of Victoria, who toured England with the Australia A party last summer. The West Indians broke the partnership when Elliott was stumped by Courtney Browne for 76 off the bowling of Roger Harper, the off spinner.

AUSTRALIA SQUAD: M A Taylor (captain), I A Healy, D C Boon, M S Kasprowicz, C J McDermott, R T Ponting, G D McGrath, P R Reiffel, M J Slater, S K Warne, M E Waugh, S R Waugh.

At last, the secret of fame and how you can share its rewards

Simon Barnes
On Saturday

HERE is a thought to consider over Christmas and carry over into the new year — that is, if you want to be really famous. The first thing is to be really, really good at sport, but do remember, that this, though utterly essential, is only the start. You must then start stage two. Stage two options include raping somebody, getting stabbed, taking drugs, getting involved in dodgy finance or kicking somebody in front of several thousand witnesses.

That is the way to become one of the sports stories of the year. This is what emerges after the Associated Press news agency polled its legion of subscribers outside North America for their views on the year's best yarn. Here are the results.

☐ 1. Mike Tyson gets out of jail, returns to the ring.
☐ 2. Miguel Induráin wins fifth successive Tour de France.
☐ 3. Steffi Graf, tennis victories, tax problems.
☐ 4. Monica Seles's comeback after the stabbing.
☐ 5. Michael Jordan returns to basketball.
☐ 6. Eric Cantona kicks a spectator.
☐ 7. Jonathan Edwards breaks world triple jump record.
☐ 8. *Diego Maradona returns after drugs ban.*
☐ 9. Ajax win European Cup.
☐ 10. Atlanta Braves win the World Series.

Career move

Michael Jordan made the career switch fashionable when he left basketball for baseball, and then went back again. Now, I hear that Roy Jones, the International Boxing Federation (IBF) super-middleweight — this class is like normal middleweight, but a bit more super — boxing champion is about to leave the "sport" of boxing and become a basketball player. He has a title defence on January 12 against somebody called Merqui Sosa, after which he will travel to London to try for a place with a team called the London Towers. This being boxing, some suspect that this is merely a complicated ploy to set up a lucrative punch-up with Nigel Benn, but London Towers say that they are being used so that Jones can win a career in the NBA, the United States' big league. If Jones is good enough to play for London, the drop in income will be slightly noticeable. "He might go from $9 million [about £5.8 million] a year to about £8,000," a Towers spokesman, said.

☐ *This column does not flinch from horror stories. Yes, I'm afraid it is true. They have started* Question of Sport *in Australia. The captains are Mal Meninga and Merv Hughes. What happens next? The wise Australian goes out to the pub, I suppose.*

Quiet please

Here is another top ten, this one from *Total Football magazine. In consultation with an acoustics expert* called Paul Harrison, it has come up with a top ten of the noisest football supporters in England — not terribly interesting, Leeds United won it from Newcastle United — and, far more important, the quietest. Analysts visited each club three times. "The vital loudness reading was provided by the percentage of fans who sang and the noise they made in proportion to the gate." That is why Barnsley got third. However, far better, is the top ten for meekness: 1, Bournemouth; 2, Brighton; 3, Scarborough; 4, Torquay; 5, Wimbledon; 6, Crewe; 7, Hereford; 8, Barnet; 9, Lincoln; 10, Watford. As a result of this information, this column has instantly become a Bournemouth fan. Something to be proud of, but not something to shout about.

☐ *A final suggestion for Magic Numbers arrives too late to make the main draw. Father Barnaby Dowling of Wells suggests 38, this being the score made by Tewin Irregulars against the Vatican XI (Barnes 4). There were 13 scoring strokes in the innings. My own at least gave the satisfaction of damn near killing third slip (B Dowling).*

Greek gift

A column this time of year should impart the sense of time passing, but with the old values remaining essentially the same, so here is a newly uncovered story about ancient bribery in football. In 1934, before the World Cup was held in their own country, Italy had to win through a qualifying group comprising only themselves and Greece. Italy won 4-0 in Milan, but the return game was never played — doubly odd because Greece would have made good money from the fixture. The Greek Football Association declined to play on the grounds that they had no chance of winning. There are four surviving members of that Greece team, all in their eighties. They have recently been approached by sporting historians and they have all told the same story — yes, they were bribed. The players received no money, though. The officials got the lot and spent it on a new headquarters in Athens. The fixture was called off and Italy went on to win the 1934 World Cup.

Tomba hits new heights on all-time winners' list

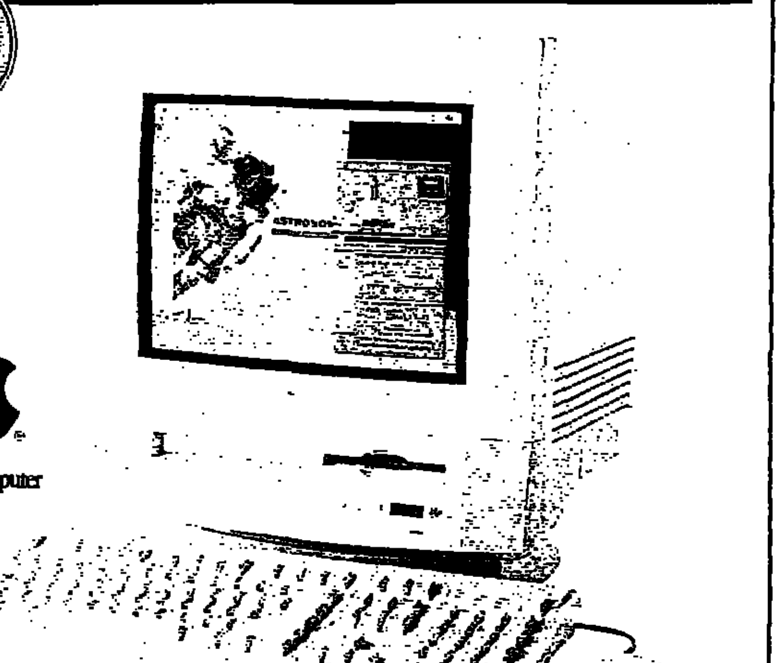
ALBERTO TOMBA, of Italy, stormed back from a one-race boycott to collect his second World Cup slalom skiing win in four days at Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, yesterday. The win was the 46th of Tomba's spectacular but often turbulent career, moving him past Marc Girardelli, of Luxembourg, into second place on the all-time victory list behind Ingemar Stenmark, of Sweden, who won 86 times in the 1970s and 1980s.

Jure Kosir, the local favourite, finished second, 1.21sec slower than Tomba's time of 1min 36.84sec. Sebastien Amiez, of France, was third in 1min 38.43sec. Tomba had talked of boycotting the slalom yesterday after pulling out of a giant slalom on the same course on Thursday.

He was furious at a decision to restart the race from scratch after fog had forced an interruption. One of 12 racers to ski before the fog descended, Tomba refused to make a second start, saying that the lack of snow made the course dangerous. The controversy seemed to inspire him yesterday, as he charged through the 57 gates of the first run to set the best time by half a second and more than doubled his advantage on the second to register the 31st slalom victory of his career.

"This is a great win, but I'm not totally happy," Tomba said. "Too many things have happened in the last 24 hours. People sometimes don't understand my reactions. They don't see that my purpose is to defend ski racing and that I had nothing to gain personally with all that happened."

THE TIMES TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS COMPETITION


Apple Computer

Win an Apple Macintosh Performa

Today *The Times*, coming to the end of our *Twelve Days of Christmas* competition, brings you the chance to win an Apple Macintosh multi-media personal computer.

To make the competition more fun, we reversed the traditional order of the popular carol, and started off with a prize of 12 hampers from Fortnum's, 11 cases of Moet & Chandon, ten Marks & Spencer vouchers and so on. The first day of Christmas would have seen your true love sending a partridge in a pear tree, but your favourite newspaper decided something more in keeping with today's lifestyle would make a better prize.

The Performa 5300, which comes with the Apple MPEG (Motion Picture Experts Group) Media system pre-installed, is worth £2,300. Ideal for the home-office user, it also comes with software to teach children about maths and wild life, an encyclopaedia, plus art work to just have fun with or help to make a success of desktop publishing.

HOW TO ENTER

Simply identify the following lines from a popular Christmas carol.

The cattle are lowing

The baby awakes

Call our competition hotline below with your answer. The line is open until midnight tonight. The first correct entries chosen at random will win. Normal Times Newspapers competition rules apply.

CALL OUR HOTLINE ON 0891 66 55 34

Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times

Saturday portrait: Howard Wilkinson, by Oliver Holt

Sergeant Wilko ready to lead the charge against old enemies

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE MARTIN

Howard Wilkinson has a dry, gruff northern wit that makes you smile. Some say that he is growing increasingly eccentric; quirky, even. He does not try to camouflage the fact that a long interview is not on the agenda when he answers the phone. "Do us a favour," he says. "Make it all up."

His mind is racing, itching to get on to other things. After all, his Leeds United team lost 6-2 to Sheffield Wednesday, his former charges, last Saturday. Things are not going well. How does he feel about the season? "Disappointed." Why is he disappointed? "Because we have not won enough football matches." Time to move on.

Move on, though, and you hit another brick wall. Tomorrow, Leeds play Manchester United at Elland Road and Wilkinson is preparing for another dose of Eric Cantona. Wilkinson sold the Frenchman to his side's most bitter rivals three years ago, and whenever the teams meet, Cantona's continuing brilliance prompts a critical look at the man who let him go. The timing this year, with Leeds in the midst of a slump, is particularly unfortunate.

Somehow, there is an air about Wilkinson reminiscent of George Graham in his final days at Arsenal. There is no scandal, of course, but there is the same feeling of a man beginning to survive on past glories, almost untouchable because he won the holiest of holies, the league championship, four years ago. Embarrassed by PSV Eindhoven in the Uefa Cup last month, the team looks stale, as though it needs fresh impetus, a new man at the helm who will enthuse the players with some different ideas.

Wilkinson, 52, a former schoolteacher, is not afraid to fight his corner. He is a deep thinker, a rambling but articulate speaker who has written a half-finished autobiographical novel and holds a Bachelor of Education degree in PE. He is chairman of the League Managers' Association and has become synonymous with his club, his face peering out from under the peak of a baseball hat, mouth open, shouting instructions Sergeant Wilko-style. His simple football principles like "winning is easier if nobody minds who gets the credit" and "good football is winning football" are posted up around the Leeds changing-room.

The most disaffected sections of the supporters, though, have made a few muted calls for Wilkinson to be sacked. The critics are ganging up and the manager is showing signs of developing a siege mentality. He is not shy of putting his case for the defence.

"I have been managing since I was 28, one way or the other," he said. "I have never had the sack and I have never been relegated. I had 3½ years at Notts County. When I left, they got relegated. I had 5½ years at Sheffield Wednesday. When I left, they got relegated. I have had 7½ years here. We have won the league championship and the Charity Shield.

> **'If I spent my life worrying about what might happen, I would never do anything again'**

"I have been manager of the England under-21 team and the England B team and I don't think we lost a football match while I was involved. I was offered the England assistant manager's job by Bobby Robson and I have been offered other Premiership jobs and jobs abroad. Those are the facts. The rest is propaganda."

That "propaganda" is disseminated with verve and from varying directions. There are those among the Leeds supporters who will never forgive Wilkinson for the sale of Cantona, nor that of David Batty to Blackburn Rovers, especially as both have continued to show their mettle since leaving. John Sheridan and Vinnie Jones, other players popular with the supporters, were also sold.

His buys have not quite won him back the lost ground. Carlton Palmer has been a reasonable success and Tony Yeboah, the Ghanaian, has become a cult figure despite his recent goal drought. David Rocastle, though, was a £2 million misfit, Brian Deane failed to prosper at centre forward and has been pushed out to the right wing and David White has been sent to Sheffield United on loan. Tomas Brolin, the Swede, is the most expensive gamble of all, but it is too early to say if he will be a success or not.

Another anti-Wilkinson faction showed its hand in October when it was revealed that the Leeds manager was on the short-list for the post of technical director to the Football Association. The thought of the man who has been labelled as one of the prime exponents of the long-ball game setting the course for English football was anathema to the purists. Those who deride the principles of Charles Hughes, the incumbent, said that Wilkinson would provide more of the same. "Labels and stereotypes are for lazy minds," is Wilkinson's retort.

No appointment has been made yet, but Leslie Silver, the Leeds chairman, said that he would fight tooth and nail to keep his manager and Wilkinson appeared to rule himself out. A few months earlier, he turned down an offer from Galatasaray, the Turkish club, that would have made him the second best paid club manager in the world after Johan Cruyff. He said that he still had a job to finish at Leeds.

That job began in October 1988 after a modest playing career and solid managerial apprenticeships at Boston United, Notts County and Sheffield Wednesday. Seven other Leeds managers, including former playing favourites like Allan Clarke, Eddie Gray and Billy Bremner, had tried and failed to recreate the glory days of Don Revie in the early 1970s.

Those who criticise Wilkinson now, of course, tend to forget that Leeds were 21st in the then second division when he took over and without a win in nine games. One of his first actions was to take down the huge pictures of Revie's team that dominated the club foyer. "There are ghosts in every nook and cranny here," he said.

The next season, Leeds were second division champions and in 1991-92 they were challenging for the top prize. Wilkinson brought in key players like Cantona, Gordon Strachan and Lee Chapman, and in the final run-in against Manchester United, the favourites, Wilkinson stayed calm as Alex Ferguson, his counterpart, cracked under the pressure. Leeds took the title.

The season after, though, was a terrible disappointment, poor performances in Europe mirroring a miserable season in the new Premiership. The team that won the title grew old quickly and Wilkinson has struggled ever since to recreate that success. He maintains that a consistent supply of goals from a striker is all that the team needs to be capable of a new championship challenge, but that has yet to materialise. In the interim, Leeds have become more and more dependant on the playmaking skills of Gary McAllister, another of Wilkinson's successes.

Leeds stand ninth in the Premiership today, hardly a disgrace but not the heights that they yearn to be hitting. Cantona, who Wilkinson insists demanded to move because he could not stomach being dropped, stands in the way of the beginning of a recovery, but Wilkinson remains unrepentant about the sale. "I make a decision and it is the best one at the time," he said. "If I spent the rest of my life worrying about what happens, afterwards, I would never do anything again. Listen, if I had bought Pelé when I was at Notts County, we would have won the championship; but I didn't and it doesn't bother me."

THE TIMES MATCH-BY-MATCH GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP THIS WEEKEND

COVENTRY v EVERTON

Coventry's angst will be not eased by the absence of Peter Ndlovu over the Yuletide period. He has an eye injury and has been advised to rest by the Highfield Road medics. Everton are also without a striker of some repute, most of it ill, with Duncan Ferguson confined to barracks again. He has made only two appearances, as a substitute, since he returned from detention at Her Majesty's Displeasure, and the Barlinnie bruiser is kept out this afternoon by flu. Everton may not need him, such is Coventry's plight.

LAST SEASON: Coventry City 0 Everton 0.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 1-3, 1-1, 1-2, 0-1, 2-0, 3-1, 0-1, 0-1, 2-1, 0-0.

COVENTRY CITY (from): S Ogrizovic, R Shaw, D Busst, D Rennie, P Williams, M Hall, P Telfer, K Richardson, N Whelan, A Pickering, J Salako, D Dublin, N Lamptey, J Filan.
EVERTON: N Southall, M Jackson, D Watson, C Short, D Unsworth, A Kanchelskis, A Limpar, J Parkinson, J Ebbrell, G Stuart, D Amokachi. Substitutes: P Rideout, B Horne, J Kearton.

LIVERPOOL v ARSENAL

Bad boys Steve Bould and Tony Adams have been given a rest, courtesy of the FA's disciplinary department, and the partnership of Andy Linighan and Martin Keown, with the utmost respect, does not quite inspire the same confidence. Especially at fortress Anfield. A touch of sorrow for Arsenal but nobody should pity Stan Collymore, who has lost out in his attempt to claim £425,000 from Nottingham Forest because, he said, he did not ask for an £8.5 million transfer from the City Ground. Tall striker, tall story.

LAST SEASON: Liverpool 3 Arsenal 0.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 2-0, 2-1, 2-0, 0-2, 2-1, 0-1, 2-0, 0-2, 0-0, 3-0.

LIVERPOOL (from): D James, J McAteer, R Jones, M Wright, S Harkness, J Scales, J Barnes, S McManaman, M Thomas, R Fowler, S Collymore, N Clough, M Kennedy, S I Bjornebye, D Matteo, A Warner.
ARSENAL (from): D Seaman, L Dixon, N Winterburn, M Keown, D Platt, I Wright, P Merson, G Helder, J Hartson, J Jensen, A Linighan, P Dickov, S Morrow, D Hillier, V Bartram.

MANCHESTER CITY v CHELSEA

Alan Ball breaks the good old Johnny Foreigner rule, thanks to good old Johnny Bosman, when he boldly goes where no Premiership manager has gone before. City will field at least four "imports" at Maine Road today and to hell with the consequences, even if Gordon Taylor, of the good old PFA, fears that the English market will now be flooded with cheap imitations from the Continent. Ruud Gullit certainly was cheap, apart from his wages, and he could return for Chelsea after a six-match absence.

LAST SEASON: Manchester City 1 Chelsea 2.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 0-1, 1-2, —, 2-3, 1-1, 2-1, 0-0, 0-1, 2-2, 1-2.

MANCHESTER CITY (from): E Immel, A Coton, I Brightwell, K Symons, K Curle, A Kernaghan, R Ingram, N Summerbee, G Kinkladze, M Brown, N Quinn, U Rösler, G Creaney, R Ekelund.
CHELSEA (from): D Kharine, S Clarke, E Johnson, A Myers, D Wise, M Hughes, M Stein, J Spencer, K Hitchcock, D Lee, E Newton, R Gullit, P Furlong, D Petrescu, M Duberry, T Phelan.

MIDDLESBROUGH v WEST HAM

Middlesbrough's Coca-Cola Cup defeat by Birmingham City, at a refrigerated St Andrew's on Wednesday, will have alarmed Bryan Robson. Gutless is not quite the adjective to describe their display, but they produced few of the sterling qualities so often associated with Robson at his peak. Even Juninho was anonymous. Barmby was missed, badly, and will be again today; his Achilles tendon problems have not cleared up. West Ham are without Martin for Christmas because of hamstring trouble.

LAST SEASON: No fixture.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: —, —, —, 1-0, 0-1, 0-0, —, —, —, —.

MIDDLESBROUGH (from): G Walsh, N Cox, C Whyte, S Vickers, N Pearson, C Fleming, P Stamp, J Pollock, Juninho, J Hendrie, J A Fjortoft, B Robson, C Morris, J Moreno, A Moore, C Liddle, A Miller.
WEST HAM UNITED (from): L Miklosko, T Breacker, S Potts, M Rieper, J Dicks, K Rowland, I Bishop, D Williamson, R Slater, M Hughes, J Moncur, I Dowie, A Cottee, L Sealey, J Harkes, D Hutchison, Lazaridis.

NEWCASTLE v NOTTM FOREST

Newcastle have not exactly set the Premiership alight recently, but they still keep grinding out the results — an ominous sign for the chasing pack. Nine wins out of nine games at St James' Park suggests a tough time for Forest, who have drawn their past four matches 1-1. Lee is the key — he has shaken off a hip injury but succumbed to flu — and Stone may get the freedom of the park if his England colleague fails to make it. Sadly, there is still no Roy for Forest. Bold prediction? 1-1.

LAST SEASON: Newcastle United 2 Nottingham Forest 1.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 0-3, 3-2, 0-1, 0-1, —, —, —, —, —, 2-1.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): P Srnicek, W Barton, J Beresford, S Howey, D Peacock, K Gillespie, R Lee, L Clark, D Ginola, L Ferdinand, P Beardsley, P Albert, S Watson, R Elliott.
NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M Crossley, D Lyttle, D Phillips, S Pearce, C Cooper, S Chettle, S Stone, C Bart-Williams, S Gemmill, D Lee, K Campbell, I Woan, A I Haaland, S Howe, A Silenzi, R Irving.

QPR v ASTON VILLA

Simon Osborn scored his first goal for Rangers last weekend and was promptly sold to Wolves by Ray Wilkins, reuniting the subtle midfield player with Mark McGhee, his manager at Reading. How touching. Wilkins is likely to replace Osborn with an equally elegant schemer — himself — while Villa may be forced to abandon their three-strong defensive unit because of a host of injuries: 4-4-2 here we come. If Yorke is unable to play, as he recovers from a broken nose, Brian Little has a few headaches.

LAST SEASON: Queens Park Rangers 2 Aston Villa 0.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 0-1, 1-0, —, 1-0, 1-1, 2-1, 0-1, 2-1, 2-2, 2-0.

QPR (from): J Sommer, D Bardsley, T Challis, A McDonald, S Yates, A Impey, S Barker, I Holloway, M Hateley, T Sinclair, K Gallen, K Ready, R Wilkins, M Brazier, R Brevett, D Maddix, B Allen, A Roberts.
ASTON VILLA (from): M Bosnich, G Charles, A Wright, U Ehiogu, G Southgate, P McGrath, R Scimeca, I Taylor, M Draper, A Townsend, S Milosevic, T Johnson, D Yorke, N Spink, F Carr, G Farrelly.

SHEFFIELD WED v SOUTHAMPTON

Matthew Le Tissier has missed only one game for Southampton this season, officially, although some might say that he has been there in spirit only on many other occasions. A recurring calf strain — BSE perhaps? — could keep him on the sidelines, but at least mad Bruce Grobbelaar returns among the substitutes, having served his club suspension for failing to reappear on time, as he had promised, from a trip to Zimbabwe. Kovacevic and Stefanovic, Wednesday's brace of Yugoslavs, could make their Premiership bow.

LAST SEASON: Sheffield Wednesday 1 Southampton 1.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 2-1, 3-1, 2-1, 1-1, 0-1, —, 2-0, 5-2, 2-0, 1-1.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): K Pressman, I Nolan, L Briscoe, D Walker, P Atherton, S Nicol, C Waddle, M Degryse, G Whittingham, D Hirst, M Bright, J Watts, G Hyde, A Sinton, D Kovacevic, D Stefanovic.
SOUTHAMPTON (from): D Beasant, J Dodd, F Benali, R Hall, K Monkou, A Neilson, M Le Tissier, J Magilton, B Venison, T Widdrington, N Shipperley, G Watson, N Heaney, D Hughes, N Maddison, M Oakley.

TOTTENHAM v BOLTON

A home banker, stick the mortgage on it. Bolton are the only club in England without an away point this season and Tottenham have lost only once in 15 Premiership outings. "Without doubt, our best performances have come away from home," Roy McFarland said, without a hint of jest. Adding to Bolton's burden, Nathan Blake, their £1.5 million signing, has Achilles problems. Sheringham, of Tottenham, has also been restricted this week, with a bad back, and was told to refrain from all physical activity. Poor soul.

LAST SEASON: No fixture.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: No fixtures.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (from): I Walker, D Howells, C Calderwood, G Mabbutt, R Fox, E Sheringham, C Armstrong, J Dozzell, C Wilson, R Rosenthal, S Campbell, S Slade, J Edinburgh, D Kerslake, C Day.
BOLTON WANDERERS (from): K Branagan, S Green, C Fairclough, G Bergsson, G Taggart, D Phillips, A Todd, S Curcic, J McGinlay, F de Freitas, A Davison, S McAnespie, S Sellars, W Burnett, N Blake.

WIMBLEDON v BLACKBURN

Ray Harford, the Blackburn manager, fondly remembers his stint in charge at Wimbledon. Sam Hammam, the owner, owed him a £10,000 bonus and, in typical crazy fashion, decided to pay Harford in £1 coins in three large bags. It took three trusty and trusted apprentices to carry them to his car. There is not much chance of Rovers carting off the booty this time, the champions having failed to win on their league travels all season. Wimbledon could at last break their sorry spell of 15 matches without a victory.

LAST SEASON: Wimbledon 0 Blackburn Rovers 3.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, —, —, —, —, —, —, 1-1, 4-1, 0-3.

WIMBLEDON (from): P Heald, K Cunningham, A Kimble, C Perry, A Reeves, J Goodman, O Leonhardsen, R Earle, E Ekoku, M Harford, D Holdsworth, G Elkins, M Gayle, J Euell, A Clarke, P Fear, A Pearce.
BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): T Flowers, T Sherwood, C Hendry, S Ripley, A Shearer, C Sutton, H Berg, D Batty, M Newell, R Mimms, J Kenna, L Bohinen, N Marker, C Coleman, G Fenton.

HOW THEY STAND

	P	Pts	Goal diff	Recent form
1 Newcastle	18	42	+22	DWDLW
2 Manchester Utd	18	35	+16	WDDDL
3 Tottenham	18	33	+7	WDDWW
4 Aston Villa	18	32	+11	WLDDW
5 Liverpool	18	31	+16	DLDWW
6 Arsenal	18	31	+11	WDDDD
7 Middlesbrough	18	30	+7	LWDWL
8 Nottm Forest	17	28	+3	LDDDD
9 Leeds	17	25	-1	WLLDL
10 Chelsea	18	25	-2	WDDWD
11 Blackburn	18	24	+4	WDWLW
12 Everton	18	23	+2	WDDWL
13 West Ham	18	23	-5	DWLLW
14 Sheffield Wed	18	21	-1	LDWDW
15 Southampton	18	17	-11	LWDDL
16 Manchester City	18	16	-17	WWWLD
17 QPR	18	15	-12	LLDLW
18 Wimbledon	18	14	-15	LDDDL
19 Coventry	18	12	-17	LDLWL
20 Bolton	18	9	-18	LLDLL

TOMORROW

LEEDS v MANCHESTER UTD

Alex Ferguson is pining for the return of Roy Keane. "I need him so much," he said yesterday. He does, indeed, with United having gone four league matches without a victory. Keane has not played since early November, when he had a hernia operation, and has since sustained a knee knock. "I feel I could play if needed," he said. Leeds have also gone four games without success but Yeboah should be fit, after recovering from throat and chest infections, in time for the Sunday lunchtime showdown.

LAST SEASON: Leeds United 2 Manchester United 1.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: —, —, —, —, —, 0-0, 1-1, 0-0, 0-2, 2-1.

LEEDS UNITED (from): J Lukic, G Kelly, A Dorigo, C Palmer, D Wetherall, G McAllister, G Speed, R Jobson, T Brolin, A Yeboah, A Couzens, B Deane, R Wallace, N Worthington, M Ford, M Beeney.
MANCHESTER UNITED (from): P Schmeichel, D Irwin, G Neville, P Neville, R Keane, D May, S Bruce, B McClair, L Sharpe, R Giggs, A Cole, E Cantona, N Butt, P Scholes, D Beckham, K Pilkington.

WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION

10.45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights)

11am Sky Sports Ford Escort Super Sunday
Leeds v Manchester United

6.00pm Sky Sports Football Special: Premiership action and Leeds v Manchester United (highlights)

11.30pm Sky Sports Football Special

Compiled by Russell Kempson, Julian Desborough

Impossible transformation born of the Wright stuff

David Maddock on the rejuvenated Liverpool defender inspired by his daughter's example

Wright: chance to reflect

Supporters of Liverpool, used, as they are, to transformation in a turbulent city, still cannot *quite believe it*. Mark Wright, their washed-up wreck of a defender, has been replaced by a brilliant new centre half who also happens to go by the name of Mark Wright. The fact that they are one and the same player is barely credible, even allowing for a serious intake of Christmas *spirit*.

Wright, a former England international, appeared as strong a *candidate for the footballing knacker's* yard as there was. Plagued by injury and self-doubt, he was discarded by two Liverpool managers in quick succession and banished to the reserves.

That the fall was so spectacular made it even more likely that he would never return. Yet here he is, a year on, secure in the Liverpool team and pushing for an England recall.

So what happened? Wright *maintains, initially, that he had* finally emerged from a spell of injury so severe that he was thinking of having his name painted on his hospital door. Anfield sages, on the other hand, will mutter wisely about the mind. Wright is a complex character, they say, a wonderfully talented player who lost his way. His injuries were a symptom of far deeper problems.

Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, believes that his decision to leave Wright behind on a preseason tour *in the summer of 1994* eventually concentrated the player's thoughts. "Mark has done very well for us this season, and he deserves his place in the side," Evans, who predicts that Wright's experience and ability might take him back into the England squad for the European championship finals, said. "He has emerged from a difficult period, and I think it is because he has thought carefully about his position."

Wright now commands a place ahead of the three defensive signings brought to Liverpool after his own arrival — Ruddock, Scales and Babb. When pressed, he accepts that the prospect of being branded an Anfield failure was too heavy a burden to bear.

"It's all a question of mental *attitude*," *he said. "I have two* friends outside football and, when I was really close to despair, when I thought about giving up, they pulled me aside and battered me. They told me my standards were too low. Do it for youself, they said. I took it on board, I really thought about it and what I had to do."

How can a man whose career had effectively appeared over, resume it, after a two-year struggle with demons of his own making, in such an assured manner? Wright himself believes that his daughter was an inspiration. "At the same time as I was trying to come to terms with my problems, my daughter Lauren, when she was born, had a big birthmark on her leg, and she had to go through a series of skin grafts," he said.

"She *had something* like 14 operations. It wasn't really life-threatening, but I thought to myself that my daughter had been so strong — accepted it and bounced back — I should do the same. When you see seriously ill children in hospital, with all the problems they have, then you think, how can football be a problem?

"Some people need a kick up the backside and some people don't. I'm the sort of person that, when *the chips are down and things* go against me, I tend to fight back even more. Everywhere I've been, I have been a success, and there was no way I intended leaving Liverpool without earning the respect of the fans and Roy Evans. My daughter helped me to realise that."

The player himself believes that his biggest problem, especially through some acutely difficult times with Graeme Souness, Evans's abrasive predecessor, was his own headstrong nature.

It also cost him his England shirt, a painful experience to this day. Wright pulled out of the squad on the eve of the European championship finals in 1992, complaining — yet again — of an injury that he had failed to report in the warm-up games. That incensed Graham Taylor and curtailed Wright's England career. It also seemed to signal the start of his dramatic Anfield downfall, a point that is not lost on the player.

"*I said things that I thought were* right then and they were wrong," he said. "It was things I said rather than did. I've never shied away from an argument and, when something needs to be said, I've said it. At times, that went against me, and people got the wrong opinion of me. They said my attitude was wrong, but I've never had a bad attitude when it comes to football and the desire *to win*.

"Because I was out for a long time, I've had plenty of chance to think about my *future*. It crossed my mind that I may never play again, but it made me a much stronger person; there are not really many things that would bother me now. I know what I want, I aim to get it and it really is as simple of that."

Simple for sure, but sometimes the most simple things are the hardest to work out, and Wright's lost years at Anfield might just be the best testimony to that.

Sellars throws dice in another new direction

Oliver Holt meets a footballer with a refreshing attitude to his poorly-timed transfers

The man who put everything on red and saw it turn out black has nothing on Scott Sellars. This is the man who turned his back on Blackburn Rovers when they were on the brink of the big time and joined Leeds United as they succumbed to post-*championship* blues. *This is* the man who was holding down a place in the Newcastle *United team last* season and was being tipped for the England squad until a knee *injury cast doubt on his future* and prompted Kevin Keegan to buy David Ginola.

He sat in the stand as Newcastle took flight at the head of the FA Carling Premiership and Ginola became a hero. Then, three weeks ago, the dingy casino of footballing transfers cleaned him out again. He was desperate for a move, Bolton Wanderers, who have won just *twice this season*, came in for him and he took a gamble. He went from top to bottom with one throw of the dice.

> 'If I hadn't been injured Ginola may not have been signed'

Yet Sellars, 30, is not dismayed by the thought of the relegation struggle ahead. He is not that type. He talks quickly and eagerly about the challenge and the happy prospect of playing first-team football again after 11 months on the sidelines. He scored his first goal for the club in the 2-1 defeat at Queens Park Rangers last Saturday and is confident that he can help to lift the rest of the team. If only everything in life were as reliable as his temperament and his left foot.

Keegan, for one, is sure that *Roy McFarland* and Colin Todd, Bolton's managerial duo, have got a bargain at *£750,000*. "*It was a reluctant* sale," the Newcastle manager said. "There is not another player quite like him. He has not got electrifying pace, but he has got such good ball control that he goes past players and looks quick. He is an excellent passer of the ball *and he does not give it away* cheaply. He has tremendous qualities.

"*But at his age, it was* difficult to have *him* on the fringe of the team. He came to me and said he needed first-team football and that was the only reason I sold the guy. I *told him I* would not be disappointed if the Bolton deal fell through, but, taking everything into account, it was the right sale for him. Whether or not it was right for Newcastle United remains to be seen."

Sellars, who was born in Sheffield, joined Leeds United when he was 16 and played under Eddie Gray and Billy Bremner in his four-year stint. Then, he moved to Blackburn and played in Kenny Dalglish's first game in charge. He was firmly *established on the left side of* midfield when he played his last match for the club in their victory in the 1992 second division play-off final against Leicester City.

Leeds, under Howard Wilkinson, had just won the league championship and Sellars was flattered and out of contract when they made a bid for him; but he stayed only six months after being unable to force his way into the team before Keegan took him to Newcastle. He enjoyed it so much at St James' Park that he does not regret the way things turned out and, of all the managers he has played under, he rates Keegan the highest.

"I don't know whether he is *blessed or what*," Sellars said, "but he seems to have a natural way of instilling a lot of confidence in you, making you feel like you are the best player in that position. He brought out the best in me. He plays to players' strengths. He doesn't buy players and try and change them.

"Kenny was along similar lines. He was a bit more reserved, but a good man manager. He had an instant effect when he arrived. People like Kevin and Kenny, if they tell you you are doing something wrong, you can't turn round to them and say 'Well, what do you know'? I mean, they had done it all. I had an instant respect. If they spoke, I had to listen.

"I was having a great season at Newcastle last year, I was getting pushed for the England squad and then all of a sudden I got a knee injury and the season was over. People said if I played again, I wouldn't be the same and so obviously Kevin thought I might be a risk and he bought Ginola. I understood that, but it's me who's missed out again. I sometimes feel like that. It always seems to be me. If I hadn't been injured he might not have bought Ginola."

Sellars, of Bolton Wanderers, surveys Burnden *Park*, the unfashionable home of his latest club. Photograph: Barry Greenwood

Now, Sellars is in the more prosaic but cosy surroundings of Burnden Park. The Burnden Butty Bar is in a line of shops opposite the ground and, upstairs, he sits drinking tea in the club lounge where a group of pensioners are staging their Christmas party. It is a world away from Sir John Hall and a team of superstars, but Sellars does not care.

His first game was in the 1-0 defeat by Liverpool two weeks ago. "I don't feel I'm coming here and they've given up," he said. "There's more money available and they're going to try to buy. I don't really care if they've got nice changing-rooms or nice new stands. They've got a green pitch, the same as Newcastle. That's what's important to me."

Charlton a memory as Ireland go forward

From Peter Ball
in Dublin

IRELAND lost little time in putting the Jack Charlton era behind it yesterday. His resignation dominated the front pages of the morning papers, pushing John Major's visit to Dublin *into second place*, but, by the afternoon, the succession was commanding more *interest*.

The farewells were long, and heartfelt, and sometimes *tinged with sadness*. "We do have a tendency, as Heine said, 'to pull down the noble stag'." *Tim Pat Coogan, the* editor of the *Irish Independent*, wrote in his valedictory piece, but the consensus was that Charlton's decision to resign was well-timed, even if his hand was forced. Charlton's plans remain undefined.

Who the new man will be is still a matter for conjecture, however. The hopes of Mick McCarthy, the early front-runner, suffered a setback yesterday when Peter Mead, the chairman of Millwall, said that McCarthy could apply for the job, "but only at the end of the season".

That is unlikely to appeal to the Football Association of Ireland (FAI), which is eager to make an early appointment. *The position will be discussed* at the next council meeting, on January 2, and the FAI is *hoping that the new manager* will be in place for the World Cup qualifying group managers' meeting *in Liechtenstein* on January 23.

If that is not possible, Ireland hope to have a fixture in February, probably away. That would offer the new manager a *first* chance to begin his preparations for the World Cup. Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Holland are all in line for a match before the European championship finals begin, and Ireland have already accepted an invitation to take part in the United States triangular tournament in June.

Bradford take action to prevent Megson's move

By Russell Kempson and David Maddock

JUST when it appeared that the managerial conflict had ended in the Endsleigh Insurance League first division, it flared up again yesterday. Geoffrey Richmond, the Bradford City chairman, said that his second division club was taking legal action over the appointment of Gary Megson, the assistant to Chris Kamara at Valley Parade, as manager of Norwich City.

Megson took over at *Carrow Road yesterday*, after Martin O'Neill had walked out on the club on Sunday, but Bradford were unhappy with the way matters had been handled. Richmond claimed: "We are upset because what we consider to be an illegal approach was made to a contracted employee, despite assurances from Robert Chase [the Norwich chairman] 24 hours beforehand that no such approach would be made.

"Bradford City sent a fax to Chase refusing him permission to approach Megson and yet, cynically, he met Megson at a hotel in Leeds yesterday morning. This was a flagrant *breach of* Football League regulations and a breach of legal employment laws." *Bradford, who are believed to* want £100,000 in compensation, were later granted a High Court injunction to prevent Megson from taking up his new role.

Everton have been told that they must release Daniel *Amokachi, the Nigeria striker*, for the African Nations Cup tournament in South Africa, which starts on January 13. Everton had called in the Football Association to clarify the matter and were able to establish that the rules of Fifa, the sport's world governing body, stipulate that players must be released 14 days before the *tournament*. Nigeria play their first match on January 14, so Amokachi could miss the third and fourth rounds of the FA Cup as well as Premiership fixtures, *against Arsenal and* Chelsea.

Wimbledon face a similar dilemma with Efan Ekoku, who is also in the Nigeria squad, while other Premiership clubs *affected are Leeds* United, who have Tony Yeboah playing for Ghana, and *Phil Masinga and Lucas* Radebe for South Africa, and Coventry City, who have Nii *Lamptey* playing alongside Yeboah.

Alan Shearer, the Blackburn Rovers striker, is to face a Football Association inquiry. Shearer was reported to the police after allegedly making aggressive gestures to oppos*ing supporters after* he had scored in the 1-0 victory over Middlesbrough at Ewood *Park last week. An FA spokes*man said: "We have had this matter brought to our attention and we will be invesigating further."

Bournemouth, of the second division, have denied that there is a financial crisis at *Dean Court — despite bouncing* a cheque for just £9. The cheque was issued as a refund to a supporter who was unhappy with the quality of a bonfire night fireworks display at the ground, but, when he paid it into his account, it *was returned* by the bank. Ken Gardiner, the Bournemouth executive chairman, said: "We've had difficulty honouring our cheques in the past few weeks."

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FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP: Semi-finals: Group A: Istanbul: Ulker Spor 94 Unicaja (Malaga) 86. Moscow: CSKA Moscow 91 Antibes 69. Leverkusen: Bayer Leverkusen 72 Olympiakos Piraeus 81. *Group B: Athens: Panathinaikos* 67 Maccabi Tel Aviv 62. Zagreb: Cibona Zagreb 83 Pau-Orthez 78

Group A

	P	W	L	Pts
Olympiakos Piraeus (Gr)	7	5	2	12
Benetton Treviso (It)	7	5	2	12
CSKA Moscow (Russ)	7	5	2	12
Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	7	3	4	10
Ulker Istanbul (Tur)	7	3	4	10
Olympique Antibes (Fr)	7	3	4	10
Unicaja Malaga (Sp)	7	2	5	9
Iraklis Salonika (Gr)	7	2	5	9

Group B

	P	W	L	Pts
Panathinaikos (Gr)	7	6	1	13
Barcelona (Sp)	7	4	3	11
Cibona Zagreb (Cro)	7	4	3	11
Real Madrid (Sp)	7	4	3	11
Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr)	7	4	3	11
Virtus Bologna (It)	7	3	4	10
Pau Orthez (Fr)	7	3	4	10
Benfica (Por)	7	0	7	7

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Charlotte 107 Boston 97. Utah 89 Cleveland 87. *Houston 91 Portland 86; San Antonio* 114 Denver 96. Seattle 92 Vancouver 68. Los Angeles Clippers 103 Sacramento 96.

CRICKET

TOUR MATCH: Brisbane (first day of three): Australia XI 323-7 dec (G S Blewett 115, M T G Elliott 76). West Indians 37-0.

FOOTBALL

ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE LEAGUE: Second division: Postponed: Carlisle v York.
PONTINS LEAGUE: First division: Leeds 1 *Stoke 0 (at Halifax)*. Bolton 1 Tranmere 3
JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Felixstowe Town 1 Haverhill Rovers 1.
JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division. AFC Totton 0 Wimborne 2.
SCHOOLS MATCHES: FA Premier League: Under-16 Trophy: Cambridgeshire 2 Suffolk 0. Humberside 4 Nottinghamshire 2. London Cup: Under-15: Buckinghamshire 3 Middlesex 1. English Knowles Cup: Under-14. Buckinghamshire 1 *Middlesex* 3, Cambridgeshire 3 Suffolk 1. Greater Manchester Cup: Under-19: Final: Winstanley College, Wigan 3 Ridge Danyers College, Stockport 1
SPANISH LEAGUE: Deportivo la Coruña 3 Real Madrid 0
BELGIAN LEAGUE: FC Bruges 3 Seraing 1. Standard Liège 1 Waregem 1

ICE HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): *Florida* 6 Winnipeg 1. New York Rangers 2 Philadelphia 1. New Jersey 2 Tampa Bay 2. Toronto 3 Chicago 3. New York Islanders 3 Dallas 3.

RUGBY UNION

Schools International

Scottish Sch	12	French Sch	18

Scottish Schools: *Penalty goals*: Ross 4. French Schools: Tries: Jazequel, Heymans, *Kuzdik*. Penalty goal: *Teulet*

(at Murrayfield)

TENNENTS INTER-DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIP: Postponed: Edinburgh District v North and Midlands

SKIING

KRANJSKA GORA, Slovenia: Men's World Cup: Slalom: 1, A Tomba (It) 1min 36.84sec; 2, J Kosir (Slovenia) 1:38.05; 3, S Amiez (Fr) *1:38.43*; 4, C Mayer (Austria) 1:38.51; 5, *L Kjus (Nor) 1:38.55. World Cup* positions: Slalom: 1, Tomba 260pts; 2, Amiez 240; 3, Kosir 165; 4, F de Chignis (It) 140; 5, Mayer 130. Overall: 1, Kjus 785pts; 2, M von Grünigen (Switz) 498; 3, H Knauss (Austria) 377; 4, Tomba 356; 5, F Nyberg (Swe) 317.
VEYSONNAZ, Switzerland: Women's World Cup: Slalom: 1, P Wiberg (Swe) 1min 14.42sec; 2, U Hrovat (Slovenia) 1:14.72; 3, K Andersson (Swe) 1:14.73; equal 4, E Blavaschi (It) and K Koren (Slovenia) 1:14.95. World Cup positions: Slalom: 1, E Eder (Austria) *200pts*; 2, Hrovat 192; 3, Koren 145; 4, M Accola (Switz) 129; 5, M Kjoerstad (Nor) 112. Overall: 1, A Meissnitzer (Austria) 488pts; 2, *A Wachter (Austria)* 463; 3, M Ertl (Ger) 433; 4, K Seizinger (Ger) 413; 5, M Dorfmeister (Austria) 349. Overall Nations Cup positions: 1, Austria 4,478; 2, Switzerland 2,702; 3, Italy 1,872

TENNIS

MIAMI BEACH, Florida: Rolex Orange Bowl international championships: Singles: Boys: 18-year-olds: Fourth round: M Zabaleta (Arg) bt O Serrano (Sp) 6-2, 6-2; F Vicente (Sp) bt V Pavicevic (Yug) 6-1, 4-6, 6-4; M Lee (GB) bt B Osterbrink (Ger) 7-5, 6-2; S Navarro (Sp) bt P Wessels (Holl) 6-2, 6-1; T Haas (Ger) bt M Tabara (Cz) 7-5, 6-3; J Alonso (Sp) *bt* S Grosjean (Fr) *3-6*, 6-4, 6-3; G Canas (Arg) bt R Cerdera (Arg) 6-1, 5-7, 6-2; A Martin (Sp) bt D Matijasevic (Yug) 6-2, 6-3. 16-year-olds: Quarter-finals: *M Safin (Russ) bt A di Pasquale (Fr)* 6-2, 3-6, 7-6; F Allgauer (It) bt Z Krajan (Cro) 6-3, 6-4; J-R Lisnard (Fr) bt J Trotman (GB) 6-3, 7-6; D Sciorino (It) bt N Massu (Chile) 6-4, 6-1. *Girls: 18-year-olds: Third round*: K Nagy (Hun) bt M Pastikova (Cz) 6-0, 6-3; O Barabanchikova (Belo) bt S Kovacic (Ger) 6-1, 6-3; S Nacuk (Yug) bt M *d'Agostini (Br) 6-3, 6-1; A Cocheteux (Fr) bt* E Koulikovskaya (Russ) 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; D Ding (China) bt L Varmuzova (S Mar) 7-5, 6-4; J Schonleidova (Cz) bt T Snyder (US) 6-4, *6-2; N Hubnerova (Cz) bt M Lucic (Cro)* 7-6, 2-6, 7-5; A Kournikova (Russ) bt R Sandu (Rom) 6-2, 6-2. 16-year-olds: Quarter-finals: A Alcazar (Sp) bt A Pirsu (Rom) 6-4, 6-3; *J Lehnhoff (US) bt E Poppo (It)* 6-3, 6-2; M Radu (Rom) bt M Irvin (US) 6-1, 6-4; E Sysoeva (Russ) bt F Zuluaga (Col) 6-3, 7-6.

Doncaster Belles sitting pretty at halfway stage

Sarah Forde takes a look at prospects for the front runners in women's football

THE women's football FA Premier National League *looks set to be a much closer*-run affair than last season, as the teams go into a three-week *mid-season break*.

Arsenal, who were unbeaten last season, romped away *with the championship: this* year, it is Doncaster Belles who have the most to cheer going into Christmas. Seven points clear of Croydon at the top, they have won nine of *their first 11 league matches*.

The Belles' sweetest victory came in September when they brought *Arsenal's 18-month* unbeaten home run to an abrupt end. They finished third in the league last season and failed to reach the women's FA Cup final — a disappointing season by their own standards.

Alan Burton, the club secretary, puts the impressive start this year down to improved *fitness and the return* of experienced players who had been out with long-term injuries. "*I'm exceptionally* pleased with our performances in the first half of the season," he said. "We've got a slightly larger squad and Gail *Borman and* Jackie Sherrard have come back and done well for us while the younger players are *gaining more* experience."

The return of Borman, 32, after a cruciate ligament injury, has coincided with the Belles revival and prompted her recall into the England squad. Meanwhile, Arsenal, winners of the double last year, have had to contend with a number of setbacks and have suffered two league defeats that could have cost them the title already.

At the start of the season, they lost Gill Wylie, their *captain, who was injured in a* pre-season match and put out of action for the year, and Pauline Cope, *the England* goalkeeper, who moved to Millwall Lionesses. Since mid-November, the team has also had to do without Marianne Spacey, the England midfield player.

Spacey is expecting a child next year and has put her football career on hold. Rosa Serra, a Spain international, *has stepped in ably for* Cope and conceded just six goals all season, but replacing the two outfield players, both successful internationals, has been more of a headache for Vic Akers, the Arsenal manager.

"We've been unlucky *since June this year and it's been* a difficult period for us," he said, "but the girls have rallied round and those who have come into the team have done well. Considering the knock-backs, I can't be displeased."

Arsenal are now unbeaten *since* October 3, and will be *putting the pressure* on Doncaster and Croydon above them. The meetings between these three could decide the championship.

Croydon have often promised *much and delivered* little in terms of silverware, but, under Debbie Bampton, the England captain and Croydon's player-manager, they are proving serious championship contenders.

They are the only unbeaten team in the league and *Bampton is optimistic that*, this year, they have a side that can keep the pressure on the Belles. "*Morale is very good* — that's what has made the difference," she said. "We are looking forward to playing Doncaster Belles and Arsenal — we've never beaten them — perhaps *now* is the time."

With the form of Liverpool and Wembley, fourth and fifth in the league respectively, erratic, they seem unlikely to pose any *real threat*. Wembley, a young and skilful side, have, however, played their part in opening up the championship race. They inflicted the first defeat of the season on Doncaster Belles when a victory for the Belles would have *put them ten points* clear.

At the other end of the table, *the miserable form of* Wolverhampton Wanderers makes them firm favourites for relegation, even at this halfway stage.

RUGBY UNION 36
RODBER GIVEN A
CHANCE TO TACKLE
TOP-CLASS OPPONENTS

CRICKET 37
FRUSTRATION REIGNS
AFTER DOWNPOUR
RUINS ENGLAND'S GAME

SATURDAY DECEMBER 23 1995

Premier League drops rule

City force open floodgates for foreign players

BY DAVID MADDOCK AND JOHN GOODBODY

THE deadlock after the European Court's ruling on the case of Jean-Marc Bosman was broken yesterday when Manchester City named four foreign players in their squad to meet Chelsea in the FA Carling Premiership football match at Maine Road today.

In a pioneering move, City decided to follow European laws, rather than the regulations of Uefa. European football's governing body, and forced the FA Premier League reluctantly to lift the restrictions that a maximum of three foreigners and two "assimilated" players could appear in a match.

There was an air of celebration at Maine Road last night, which was not linked with the staff Christmas party taking place at the club. Francis Lee, the chairman, and his board of directors were claiming a breakthrough, which will allow Premiership clubs to field as many European Union (EU) nationals as they want.

Colin Barlow, the club's managing director, had approached the Premier League with an ultimatum yesterday as City had tried all week, without success, to implement the decision of the European Court last week that football was not exempt from laws on the free movement of workers across borders.

Barlow finally informed Rick Parry, the chief executive of the Premier League, that he had been advised in a fax from Padraig Flynn, a European Parliament commissioner, that he had legal grounds to challenge the rule. He added that, if necessary, City would go to court.

Barlow said: "We told the Premier League that our advice firmly suggested we could field more EU nationals and then take the matter to court, where ultimately we would win our argument.

"The League finally conceded. It is the best Christmas present for which we could have hoped and it is an important victory. We have been fighting this all week and that makes it even more pleasing to have won."

Alan Ball, the Manchester City manager, will now select his three EU nationals — Uwe Rösler and Eike Immel, of Germany, and his recent signing, Ronnie Ekelund, of Denmark — along with his non-EU national, Georgiou Kinkladze, of Georgia. He believes that the ruling will change the face of English football, with clubs now queueing up to import players from the rest of the Continent. There are already 57 overseas players in the Premiership and 88 in the Endsleigh Insurance League.

Manchester City squad

† E Immel (Germany)
A Coton (England)
I Brightwell (England)
K Symons (Wales)
K Curle (England)
A Kernaghan (Ireland)
R Ingram (England)
N Summerbee (England)
* G Kinkladze (Georgia)
M Brown (England)
N Quinn (Ireland)
† U Rösler (Germany)
G Creaney (Ireland)
† R Ekelund (Denmark)

** Overseas player † EU national*
Others considered home players

Ball said: "As the rules stand now under European law, you can have as many EU nationals as you want, and three more foreigners on top of that. I am sure you will see many clubs quickly shopping abroad."

Uefa's regulations used to allow clubs three foreigners plus two "assimilated players", those who have lived in the country for at least five years or have played in that club's youth team.

Ball said: "You can find much better quality abroad at a fraction of the price that you have to pay in England, even when players are still in contract. I bought Immel and Ekelund for well under a million pounds and I have at least three more I want."

Uefa and Fifa, the world governing body, seemed yesterday to be preparing to clash with the European Court by stating that they would not change their regulations on the numbers of foreigners permitted in European competitions in the middle of this season's club competitions. However, in Brussels, the European Commission said that the court ruling applied immediately and reserved its right to tackle the two governing bodies if they stepped out of line.

Parry said: "We are, of course, aware of the statement issued by Fifa and Uefa and we accept fully, in the interests of continuity and fairness, that competition rules should not be changed part-way through a season. However, our legal advice is clear — current rules on EU nationals, even if maintained, cannot be enforced. Clubs could simply break the rules and then expose us to a court case that we feel we cannot win."

After a meeting in Zurich, the two governing bodies decided to join forces to try to block artificial transfers, which have become possible with the Bosman decision. Players, whose contracts have ended, could go briefly abroad, before returning to their original country to play for another club.

Under the judgment of the European Court last week, players moving across borders in the European Union are not subject to transfer fees, whereas clubs can still ask for a fee for a player moving directly to another club in the same country.

In a statement yesterday, the two organisations said that they "wished to reassure their member associations that they will act to ensure that the artifical transfer system are not misused as a means to dismantle domestic transfer regimes by 'the back door'".

The Football Asssociation yesterday ruled out a rematch between England and Ireland in February, a year after the match in Dublin between the countries was abandoned because of trouble caused by the English supporters.

An FA spokeswoman said: "We do look forward to playing Ireland again in the future, but there is no international date in February and it is more likely that there will be a squad session instead."

***Wilkinson portrait*, page 38**
Weekend guide, page 38
Happy Sellars, page 39
Legal threat, page 39

Kluivert facing jail over car crash charge

PATRICK KLUIVERT, the brilliant Ajax and Holland forward, could be facing up to a year in prison after yesterday being prosecuted for involuntary manslaughter for his part in a fatal car crash.

A spokesman for the Amsterdam Public Prosecutor's Office announced that Kluivert is being charged after the incident in September in which his car was in collision with another car. The driver of the other car was killed and his passenger seriously injured. The maximum sentence is a year in jail, but he could also be fined and banned from driving if found guilty.

Kluivert, 19, scored both goals in Holland's European championship play-off victory over Ireland last week and the winning goal in the European Cup final last season.

Marc Overmars, his Ajax team-mate, is out of the European championship finals next summer after suffering a knee injury in his team's win over De Graafschap Doetinchem on Wednesday, a Dutch news agency reported yesterday.

Phillips leads an attack by the Scottish Schools forwards against the French at Murrayfield yesterday. Photograph: Shaun Botterill/Allsport

Scotland fail to build on royal ascent

David Hands, rugby correspondent, watches the Queen's grandson make an encouraging debut for Scottish Schools

ROYALTY'S function in the sports arena is generally confined to pressing the flesh and presenting trophies. The presence therefore, of the Queen's grandson at a chilly, rainswept Murrayfield yesterday as an active participant brought a warm glow of pride at a time when her family can do with some good cheer.

Peter Phillips's appearance in the schools' rugby union international between Scotland and France ensured, at the very least, that the small crowd of parents and friends was virtually doubled by the media. More than 40 photographers, some from France, and almost as many journalists recorded every move of a young man treading the international stage.

The Princess Royal watched discreetly with her husband, Commander Timothy Laurence, and daughter, Zara, as Phillips and his colleagues were beaten 18-12. Now, the family must wait anxiously to see if the Scottish selectors, who met last night, will retain the 18-year-old flank forward for the match against the Welsh Schools on January 5.

The match was hardly the stuff of which even royal dreams are made. Both countries were playing for the first time this season, but France, with more physical presence up front and more pace behind, always looked to have matters in hand after scoring two tries within six minutes at the start of the second half.

Only once have the Scottish Schools won this fixture, but, with a XV lacking the guile of last season, they did well to stay in touch through Gordon Ross's four penalty goals. On this showing, however, they are a one-dimensional side, unless opponents grant their midfield more space than the French were prepared to do.

Phillips, wearing his trademark scrum cap until doffing it midway through the second half, clearly has the stomach for the fray and works hard at his game without indicating at this stage that he will make a mark in senior rugby. A solid grounding in the game at Port Regis School in Dorset preceded his Gordonstoun career and, this season, he has been part of a notably successful school team that has lost only once.

Within seconds of the kick-off, Olivier Terryn, the French hooker, felt the weight of his tackle and a couple of times his handling enabled Scotland to carry the game to their opponents. Phillips looks to have the endurance of a traditional No 6, though, at 5ft 11in, he was part of a comparatively small back row.

Yet his leadership skills — next term he becomes guardian (head boy) at Gordonstoun — were obvious; though not the Scottish pack leader, he worked hard encouraging his colleagues, who were still forcing the pace at the final whistle even though the French tryline was seldom threatened.

"Like the rest of the boys he's a little disappointed," Tom Robertson, the president of the Scottish Schools Rugby Union, said. "He would probably have preferred not to have had all the attention. He's very keen to be accepted as just one of the team."

Though Benoit Jezequel stretched over for the first try, the Scottish boys turned round leading 6-5 and Ross's third penalty goal extended their advantage; but they had little answer to the tries scored by Christophe Heymans and Sylvain Kuzdik, the French wings, which rounded off sustained bursts of continuity.

Rain and frost pose threat

RAIN appears to have edged neck and neck with frost in the race to become the most disruptive influence to the National Hunt programme on Boxing Day.

The London Weather Centre yesterday forecast that a thick band of rain would steadily push south during the weekend, followed by further cold nights as the country limbers up for a full sporting programme on Tuesday.

A further warning by the Weather Centre for snow on the hills in the north will not cause Michael Webster, the Kempton clerk of the course, any sleepless nights, but the threat of further rain is another matter. Webster said: "We have had two inches of rain in the last five days and further showers are forecast, but my worry is the forecast of heavy frost for Christmas night.

"We will take the precaution of covering the take-offs and landings. At the moment, there is some good ground but a lot of soft."

However, the meeting at Ayr is in jeopardy because of the expected freeze. Mark Kershaw, the track manager, said: "The course is raceable at the moment, but there is a severe frost forecast for the next two nights and, in view of that, we will hold a precautionary inspection at 11.30 on Sunday morning."

The Endsleigh Insurance League second division football match between Carlisle United and York City at Brunton Park last night was called off because of a waterlogged pitch. The Edinburgh District v North and Midlands match in the Tennents inter-district rugby union championship was postponed because of the effects of snow.

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INSIDE

Who was the outstanding golfer of 1995? Corey Pavin? John Daly? Colin Montgomerie or one of the other victorious European Ryder Cup team? Answer: None of the above. On page 34. John Hopkins talks to the real champion, Annika Sorenstam, of Sweden. And on page 35, Simon Barnes counts the year's magic numbers

BOXING DAY TIMES

Can One Man follow the trail blazed by Desert Orchid? A new grey eminence steps forward

Early start accelerates Derby protests

Richard Evans, racing journalist of the year, reports on a clash of fixtures that has revived controversy over a break from tradition

THE organisers of the Vodafone Derby ran into angry protests last night after they confirmed that the classic race at Epsom will start almost 90 minutes earlier next year — to avoid a clash with the opening game of the European football championship finals.

The world's most famous Flat race, which broke with tradition this year when it was switched from the first Wednesday in June to a Saturday, will be run on June 8 at 2.25pm — 35 minutes before England kick off against Switzerland at Wembley — as opposed to the normal time of 3.50.

Peter O'Sullevan, BBC's voice of racing, has been leading a campaign to get the Derby switched back to a Wednesday, and last night he warned of the potentially disastrous consequences flowing from the announcement yesterday.

"The most frightening scenario is that 1996 will be a failure, but the organisers will blame it on the clash with the football and carry on with staging the Derby on a Saturday in 1997," he said. "That would be the death knell for the race."

O'Sullevan fears that tinkering with the time of the race will serve only to undermine the Derby. "The only possible salvation in 1996 is if an equine Maradona appears with four legs assisted by the hand of God," he said.

Although the switch from a Wednesday to Saturday was actively encouraged by a majority of racing professionals, the lack of atmosphere at the race this year has prompted a re-think. Lester Piggott, Pat Eddery, Willie Carson and Dick Hern are among those who believe that the 1½-mile race should revert to its own special spot on a Wednesday, when it would attract maximum coverage and interest.

Edward Gillespie, the managing director of United Racecourses, which includes Epsom, explained: "Saturday 8 June 1996 will be an outstanding day for English sport and we feel it is important that as many of the country's sports fans as possible have the chance to watch or listen to both the European championship and the Vodafone Derby without interruption.

O'Sullevan: warning

"This slightly earlier time is just one part of our plan to continue to build and maintain the tradition and pre-eminence of the Derby. This is the second year that the race has been staged on a Saturday in recognition of the changing trends in the leisure market."

Market research has shown there are five times as many potential customers on a Saturday than on a Wednesday and Gillespie claimed that encouraging advance bookings for the race next year showed that the switch to a Saturday "is considerably enchancing the popular appeal of the Derby".

Gillespie added: "We were warmly applauded by all the racing industry for our original move of the Vodafone Derby from Wednesday to Saturday. We have consistently said that it would take two to three years for us to determine the success or otherwise of the move and that it could not be judged on first year results."

However, it was significant that Gillespie and Christopher Spence, the chairman of the Epsom race committee, went out of their way to stress that the decision yesterday covered only 1996, after which there will be a review. "May be the traditionalists will win; I think the jury is out," Spence said.

In a separate racing controversy, Matthew McCloy, the chairman of the British Horseracing Board's industry committee, is under renewed pressure to resign. McCloy, who was handcuffed during a flight to the United States after drinking and subsequently pleaded guilty to disorderly behaviour, has been formally asked to "consider his position" by the Racehorse Owners Association. The owners, who had initially supported the Newbury-based lawyer, expressed their lack of confidence in him at a council meeting earlier this week.

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